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ARTICLE I.

CONGREGATIONAL POLITY, USAGES AND LAW.

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I. STATEMENT OF THE SUBJECT. It is no part of our purpose, in what follows, to advocate or defend Congregationalism ; to prove that it is better or more scriptural than any other polity ; or to trace its general history in this country. We shall not attempt, therefore, to be profound or exhaustive. There are many questions connected with the subject which we do not propose to answer, for the reason that we do not claim to know what answer to give.

Desiring to contribute something that may possibly be of value, for common use, in promoting the good order, harmony and fellowship of the churches, our design is simply to state what the Congregational system is, and how it is regarded by judicial tribunals, which have the care of the civil rights and material interests of those connected with it. To do this, it will be necessary to define, as distinctly as possible, the qualities and powers and usages of the churches, and the relations which they sustain to parishes, to their pastors and to each other. From these relations certain reciprocal duties, rights and liabilities result, which have often been matters of controversy in courts of law. Hence it is, that, in its legal aspect, Congregationalism has become a well ordered and established

system, as capable of being understood and maintained as those politics that are more hierarchical in their nature.

II. THE LAW OF USAGE. The main object of the Pilgrims in emigrating to this country was to secure religious freedom. This gave character to whatever laws they enacted. And this principle has grown stronger, rather than weaker, down to the present day. There has been but little legislation directly applicable to the churches; and that has been designed, not to interfere with them, but to protect them against any interference from the civil power. It is not to the statute books, therefore, that we are to look exclusively for the law on this subject.

But the churches are not without law, because the civil power has, for the most part, let them alone. They could not exist without law; and so they have made their own laws. In doing this, they cannot violate civil law, nor inflict other than spiritual penalties. The necessity and limits of their power are well stated by Chief Justice Tilghman: "It is necessary that they should have laws, because, without rules and discipline, no body composed of numerous individuals can be governed. But this discipline is confined to spiritual affairs. It operates on the mind and conscience, without pretending to temporal authority. No member can be fined or imprisoned. But, be he minister or layman, he may be admonished, reprov'd and finally ejected from the society."*

Every local church may have its own code of by-laws, for the management of its own internal affairs. And these, with its customs and usages, will be recognized by courts of law, as binding upon the body and determining the rights of members.

In those denominations in which the local churches are connected with some higher, general judicatory, like a synod or an assembly, the whole body of churches thus connected may have its written articles, or code of laws. In that case, these, with its usages and customs, will be recognized in determining their rights.†

As Congregationalism recognizes each local church as an

* *Riddle v. Stevens*, 2 S. & R. (Penn.) 537; *Case of St. Mary's church*, 7 ib. 556.

† *Dutch church v. Bradford*, 8 Cow. (N. Y.) 457; *State v. Crowell*, 4 Halst. (N.J.) 391.

ecclesiastical body complete in itself, not subject to the control or supervision of any other tribunal, no general code of written laws has ever been adopted by the denomination. But as these separated and scattered churches are connected together in certain relations of intercourse, communion and fellowship, these relations, not defined by any written law, have become defined by custom and usage. Such usage, in the language of Mr. Greenleaf, "is unwritten law, established by common consent and uniform practice." Those who conform to it thereby recognize it as obligatory. This principle has always been applied in secular and civil affairs. It is no less applicable in ecclesiastical matters. "A church," says Chief Justice Shaw, "is an institution of a public and solemn nature, generally understood; and its usages and courses of proceeding are well known, recognized and confirmed by law."* These usages, in New England, have for more than two hundred years been constantly recognized in courts of law in determining the mutual duties, relations, powers and rights of parishes and churches, and of their members, officers, ministers and pastors.

It could not, indeed, be otherwise. No statute prescribes how a church meeting shall be called; or who shall have the right to vote in the management of its affairs. All these matters must necessarily be determined by evidence of usage.† So when certain powers are given by law to "ordained" ministers, whether a minister has been ordained must be settled by the usages of the denomination to which he belongs.‡ In fact, nearly all questions are left to be determined in this way, for the reason previously stated, that the civil power has carefully abstained from interfering with the churches. As was said by Chief Justice Shaw: "The statutes do not designate what constitutes a church; or who are the deacons of a church; or how they are to be chosen and qualified. All these inquiries are necessarily left to usage; to the well known, established and recognized customs of the country, which render these terms intelligible and significant."§

* *Weld v. May*, 9 Cush. (Mass.) 181.

† *Field v. Field*, 9 Wend. (N. Y.) 394.

‡ *Baldwin v. McClinch*, 1 Greenl. (Me.) 102.

§ *Parker v. May*, 5 Cush. (Mass) 336.

The fact that the Congregational churches have such a system of unwritten law, does not in the least impair their freedom, nor violate the fundamental principles of the denomination. For this law is not an arbitrary restriction imposed from without, but merely a rule of action emanating from within. No church is bound by it except on the ground of its own voluntary assent. It is not required, or even solicited, to enter into fellowship with other churches. If it does so, it is because its members desire it. By entering into such fellowship, it adopts the usages of the denomination, and is bound by them. But it may withdraw from the fraternity at any time, and assume the prerogatives of Independency. So that the law of usage is but a voluntary, self-imposed rule of action, in its beginning and duration, with no penalty for its violation except the denial of that fellowship which it is intended to maintain.

No usage should be sustained which violates any good principle. Nor is there any danger of this. The law of usage, like other laws, changes with the progress of Christianity and civilization. It is not the arbitrary work of a day or a year; it is the product of many years or generations. It can not originate except by the concurrence of the best minds, for a long period of time. It is the freest and most flexible of all laws. The usages of the churches may therefore generally be presumed to be wise, expedient and productive of good. If otherwise in any particular, let them be changed in that respect. But so far as they are good, they ought to be maintained like other laws, though they may not secure absolute justice in every case. No system of laws, written, or unwritten, can do this, because it depends upon the imperfect judgments and opinions of men for its administration. But if, for that reason, we should abandon all system and all law, either in civil or religious affairs, we should fall into inevitable disorder anarchy and ruin.

III. THE CHURCHES. Congregationalism relates primarily to the churches. But churches usually have pastors; and, in sustaining the public ministry, they are generally associated with congregations, religious societies or parishes. There may, indeed, be a church without an organized parish; as there may

be such a parish without a church. But the two organizations generally coëxist; united, though distinct; each acting separately, in its own sphere, with its own terms of membership, some belonging to both, and some to one only. Therefore, though the general system of church polity had its origin in the churches, it embraces the ministers and parishes connected with them.

What is a church? A church has been defined, in general terms, as "a society of persons who profess the Christian religion."*

By Chancellor Walworth a church is said to be "an indefinite number of persons, of one or both sexes, who have made a public profession of religion, and who are associated together in a covenant of fellowship, for the purpose of celebrating the sacraments and watching over the spiritual welfare of each other."†

Referring to the New England churches, Chief Justice Shaw says: "A church is a body of persons, members of a Congregational or other religious society established for the promotion and support of public worship, which body is set apart from the rest of the society for peculiar religious observances, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and for mutual edification."‡

Any number of persons, professing faith in Christ and taking his teachings as their rule of life, may associate themselves together and form a church. Such a body will be an independent church. For it can have a regular standing among other churches, in any sect of Christians, only by being organized, or subsequently admitted, according to the usages of such denomination.

All churches, whether independent or denominational, are equal before the law. Under a government recognizing the fullest principles of toleration, there is no interference of the civil power, except in regard to rights of property, and then only in controversies respecting such rights. The internal policy of the churches and the administration of their spiritual concerns, are left entirely to them and to such ecclesiastical tribunals as they see fit to establish for themselves.

* 1 Bouv. Law. Dic. 227.

† Baptist church v. Witherell, 3 Paige, (N. Y.) 296.

‡ Weld v. May, 9 Cush. (Mass.) 181.

Every church, upon its organization, usually adopts some name by which it is known in the community. And generally, though not always, it adopts some creed or written articles of faith. But no change of name or of faith will change the identity of the church.* Some independent churches have no creed other than the Scriptures; and, in some denominations, the articles of faith are determined by the whole body, and not by each church for itself.

A Congregational church. Such a church has been defined as "a congregation of Christians, meeting in one place, united by a solemn covenant, with Christ for its only head, and deriving from him the right to choose its own officers, to observe the sacrament, to have public worship, and to discipline its own members."†

The word "congregational," when thus used, does not designate any association of churches belonging to any one denomination. The congregation is not a flock of churches but a flock of members in one church, not subject to any external control, but having the right of self-government in all spiritual affairs. It distinguishes a church, not by its creed, but by its polity. It requires no doctrinal belief which is not common to all Christians. It has been applied to Unitarian churches as well as to Calvinistic; and they have been held capable of taking and holding property given or devised to "Congregational" churches.‡

Nevertheless it is historically true, that for two centuries and more, amid whatever changes, the churches generally called "Congregational" have been Trinitarian. When churches were founded by the Baptists, or other denominations, though having the same polity, they were designated by the general name of the sect to which they belonged. The members of one denomination, and they only, were called Congregationalists. And when that denomination was actually divided, and the schism was consummated, the Trinitarian churches still held the same name, while the others were called "Unitarian." During the

* *Trinity ch. v. Hall*, 22 Conn. 125; *Cahill v. Bigger*, 8 B. Mon. (Ken.) 211.

† *Ecc. Rel. Knowledge*.

‡ *Abbott v. Dublin*, 38 New Hamp. 459.

period of transition it might have been otherwise ; and there are many Unitarian churches, especially in Massachusetts, that still retain the old name. But in other States, a Congregational church, as the term is now generally used and understood, is a church of the Calvinistic faith.

So, according to the definition previously quoted, a Congregational church may be independent, managing its own affairs without interference, or even advice, from other churches, and having no intercourse with them. It is the right of every church to be thus independent ; or, rather, no other church, or body of churches, has any right to say that it shall not be so. The question whether it will be associated with other churches or not is one which each church decides for itself. And a church thus independent may be called Congregational.

But such is not the common and popular sense of the word. Those churches that have always been called Congregational have not been thus independent. Even during the brief period of their being called "Independents," in the very beginning of our colonial history, the churches were associated together in various ways ; interchanging in ministry, membership and worship ; consulting and advising each other in all weighty matters in which they had a common interest. And from that day to the present, the denomination has never been composed of so many separate, independent churches, having no relations to each other ; but of a community of churches, united in fellowship, having, to great extent, a common faith, and therefore each having an interest in the purity, good order, and standard of doctrine of the whole body. This has always been a fundamental principle, clearly distinguishing the system from Independency. And a Congregational church is therefore properly understood to be one of this associated fraternity of churches.

There is no special mode provided by law for calling a church meeting. A verbal notice, given at any previous business or religious meeting, is sufficient, unless some other mode has been fixed, by usage or otherwise. The pastor, or the deacons, may call a business meeting. It is not necessary, unless required by the usage or the previous vote of the church, that public notice should be given of its object. In its secular af-

fares, according to usage, the business is done by the male members,* though there is no legal obstacle to the existence of a church without any such members.† And a majority of those present at any meeting properly called constitute a body competent to transact business.‡

A church may be dissolved, in all its ecclesiastical relations, by a vote of its members, in any meeting properly called therefor. In such a case, it is the usual course to choose a committee to give the several members letters that will enable them to unite with other churches. After the vote of dissolution, all the ecclesiastical powers of the church are vested in such committee, and the church is extinct. And though the members may meet again, and reorganize, as a new church, the former church can not be revived.

If a church which is thus dissolved is connected with an organized parish, its property will belong to the new church, if any, which may be organized in connection with such parish. But if the church to be dissolved is not connected with a legal parish, all its property should be disposed of previously to dissolution. In this way only can difficulty be averted; for the dissolution of the church not only extinguishes its own powers, but the powers of its officers. And if a church and parish connected are both dissolved, the same course should be pursued.

Though no church has any temporal authority, it has full power of discipline over its members.§ This involves the right to hear complaints, to take evidence, and to decide upon the question of guilt; to administer punishment, upon conviction, by way of rebuke, censure, suspension, or excommunication; and to have the sentence promulgated by the pastor before the whole congregation. The law protects all the parties in doing this.||

Fellowship of the churches. Fellowship implies association. This must be for some purpose. The objects sought have been various, and have therefore given variety of form to the associations designed to attain them. And these forms have been

* Parker v. May, 5 Cush. (Mass.) 336.

† Baker v. Fales, 16 Mass. 487.

‡ Field v. Field, 9 Wend. (N. Y.) 394.

§ Ancient Charters and Colony Laws, ch. 39, sec. 5.

|| Farnsworth v. Storrs, 5 Cush. (Mass.) 412.

abandoned, or changed, as the wisdom or experience of the churches has from time to time dictated. As our ancestors, when they came to this country, brought Congregationalism in the abstract, rather than in the concrete, we ought not to be surprised if we should find many changes in their customs, as the result of experience. The careful student, however, will be surprised that there have been so few.

1. When adjacent churches began to increase in number, their pastors adopted the practice of exchanging with each other. This they did, not only to lighten the burden of their own labors and cares, but to gratify their people, by giving them an opportunity to be edified by the gifts of others. This soon became, as it still continues to be, one of the established usages of the churches, so that, whenever a pastor is settled over a church, the neighboring churches have an interest as direct, though differing in degree, as the particular church over which he is to be settled. So thoroughly did this custom of exchanging become incorporated into the Congregational system, that, if a minister was too restricted in his exchanges, he was considered subject to discipline, and liable to be dismissed.* And though it was finally settled that this, like most ministerial duties, must be left to the judgment and discretion of the minister himself, and a refusal to exchange is no good cause for dismissal,† the usage is still as general as it has ever been. It is one form of association and fellowship among the churches, having its origin in the wants of both ministers and people, and tending to their mutual usefulness and edification. And though it is not confined strictly to the denomination, but is, like other Christian courtesies, sometimes extended to ministers of other sects, this does not change its purpose or effect.

2. Another mode of fellowship, probably as old as Christianity itself, is by an interchange of members among the churches. This has been more frequent in this country, because people are more migratory in new countries than in old. A transfer of members from one society to another, on account of a change of residence, has always been common, in secular as well as in religious organizations. It is not only the evidence of their

* Panoplist, June and July, 1814.

† Sheldon v. Easton, 24 Pick. (Mass.) 281.

fraternity, but the natural consequence of it. This practice has uniformly prevailed among the Congregational churches in this country.

It is true, as was said by Thomas Hooker more than two hundred years ago, there is no such thing as general membership. To be a member of one church does not make one a member of any other, nor give him any absolute right of fellowship with any other.* Each church controls its own fellowship, and adopts its own rules on this subject. One of the earliest statutes, in 1641, confirmed this exclusive right of each church in all matters of "admission, recommendation, and dismissal."† Therefore a "recommendation" from one church gives no right of "admission" to another. But by conforming to the rules adopted by each, a certificate of dismissal and recommendation has always been sufficient to enable one to transfer his relations from one church to another. This is one reason why existing churches have an interest in the organization of every new church, and advise, by councils, in regard to it. It is one reason why all have an interest in the purity and doctrinal soundness of each. It tends to maintain and preserve the essential unity of the churches, without which general harmony and communion would be impossible. It enables one, wherever his lot may be cast by providence, to hear the same Gospel, and worship with brethren of the same faith. And this form of fellowship, by its constant recognition of the fact, tends to strengthen the fraternal bond of union throughout the entire denomination.

3. Another form of fellowship is among the pastors of neighboring churches, in what are called "associations." Their origin is somewhat uncertain, though they are known to have existed for nearly two centuries. They are designed to promote the improvement of the ministers in the discharge of their professional duties, as well as for mutual council and advice respecting their several fields of labor. They are usually organized in local districts, of convenient size for frequent meetings, with written articles, specifying their objects, and prescribing terms of membership.

* 1 Hooker, 64.

† Colony Laws, chap. 39, sec. 5.

The necessity of requiring those who propose to enter upon the sacred office of the ministry, to be examined and licensed by some body of men, in order to protect the churches from imposition, is apparent to every one. To confide this power to any one central body, might endanger the liberty of the Gospel. The wisdom of the churches, by long usage, has conferred this authority upon the associations of ministers, which are so numerous and scattered that any oppression, or undue restriction, is impossible. Such licentiates are not "ministers" until they are ordained. The license is but the initiatory step to the ministry. They have no right to administer the sacraments. They frequently labor as domestic missionaries, or evangelists, until, if successful, they become the pastors of churches.

4. Somewhat analogous to ministerial associations, is the system of local conferences of churches, within counties, or other definite limits, meeting annually or more frequently, for general consultation in religious matters. Such conferences, in some form, have been held ever since the first settlement of the country. We find them specially provided for by law as early as 1641, in which the two fundamental principles of Congregationalism, church fellowship, with church independence, are clearly recognized.

"The elders of the churches and other brethren and messengers have liberty to meet monthly, quarterly, or otherwise, in convenient numbers and places, for conference and consultation about Christian church questions and occasions: provided, that nothing be concluded and imposed by way of authority from one or more churches upon another, but only by way of brotherly conference and consultation."*

The permanent membership of these conferences is not by individuals, but by churches. The particular membership, at each meeting, is generally composed of the pastors of the churches belonging to the conference, who represent their churches *ex officio*, and of lay delegates, or messengers, specially chosen as such by the churches.

Such conferences should be organized under written articles, setting forth their design and purpose, prescribing terms of

* Colony Laws, ch. 39, sec. 8.

membership, specifying their officers, with the mode of their election, and fixing the basis of church representation, and the frequency of meetings, with the manner in which they are to be called. These, however, are all matters of agreement, to be determined by the churches themselves, in their different localities. It may be desirable to have the system uniform throughout the country ; but as yet it is not.

5. In addition to the local conferences, there has always been some form of association still broader, and more extensive. In the early history of New England, we find that there were general Synods, or Councils of all the churches. These bodies assumed a kind of spiritual jurisdiction over the churches at large. Thus, the Synod of 1637 condemned as unsound a large number of doctrines that were said to have crept into the churches. The Synod of 1648 adopted the Cambridge Platform. And though they disclaimed any jurisdiction over the churches, except to give counsel and advice, they were always regarded with jealousy. Roger Williams had opposed all these forms of association, as early as 1631, for fear they might grow, in time, into presbyteries, or superintendencies, "to the prejudice of the churches' liberties." And the practice of holding such general Synods was finally abandoned.

It may be well to remind the general reader that such Synods were often called "Councils"; and some writers, in referring to them, have confounded them with local councils of the churches, from which they are clearly distinguished in principle. The general Council, or Synod, was called by all the churches, for general purposes. There was danger, therefore, as it was restricted by no written constitution, that it might assume to legislate for the churches. But the local council was called by or concerning one church, and for one specified object. In regard to that object it might have some degree or kind of authority ; but that could not endanger the freedom of the churches, any more than a suit at law could endanger the civil rights of the community. The local councils, therefore, have always been regarded with favor by the churches, while the general Councils, or Synods, were cast off as an incumbrance, or as antagonistic to Congregational principles.

In place of these Synods, in modern times, there have been

State Consociations, Conventions, or Conferences, differing in form, and perhaps in principle. Being organized under written constitutions, with limited powers, and with such restrictions as will protect the churches from any interference, they have undoubtedly been useful in promoting the unity and power of Christian effort in the various religious enterprises of the day.

In Maine, the Congregational principle is carried out, and applied, in the State Conference, by making the lay and clerical representation equal. Each church is represented by its pastor, and one or two lay delegates, in the local conference. And each local conference sends one pastor and a lay delegate, to the State Conference. This is varied slightly, but not very materially, perhaps, by a provision making certain persons members *ex officio*.

This same principle has been substantially applied in calling the National Council of the churches, to be held the present year. And if that shall be continued as an organization, it will doubtless be under a written compact, that, while it shall give the freest scope for Christian fellowship and united effort, will effectually guard the churches against any exercise of legislative or judicial authority.

6. One other form of church fellowship remains to be noticed, and that the most important of all, the system of local councils, already referred to. These have always held the chief place in New England Congregationalism, except in some localities, as applied to the body of the churches; and their nature, prerogatives, and powers, have been clearly defined by statutes and judicial decisions. Their general relation to the fellowship of the churches will be considered here; but a full consideration of them will be reserved for another section.

The existence of a class or body of churches associated together as a distinct sect, implies the necessity of some standard of qualification, and some test and tribunal of admission, to denominational standing and fellowship. In the Episcopal and Presbyterian systems, this necessity is easily met, consistently with their principles, in some central body, or office, which has jurisdiction over the churches and ministers. But how can this be done in the Congregational system? Where can the centripetal power be lodged that shall hold the denomination

together without endangering the independence of the local churches?

This want is met, in part, by the associations and conferences already described. They are, to some extent, denominational tribunals, not infringing in the least the liberty of the churches, and yet, by their terms of membership, having power to exclude ministers or churches that differ in faith or practice from the prevailing sentiment in the denomination.

But besides all these, and antecedent to them all, is the system of local councils, established and sanctioned by a common usage which is coëval with the denomination, designed and adapted to secure that essential agreement in doctrine and worship which is its only bond of union. Pastors may form associations, and churches may unite in organizing conferences; but before either can be done, both pastors and churches must be admitted to fellowship and fraternity, by local councils, called for that purpose.

Thus it will be seen, that these councils are not only in themselves one form of church fellowship; they are tribunals of admission and exclusion. They are the denominational sentinels, that hold its gates. It is not until after churches and ministers have been admitted by them into the fold, that other forms of fellowship are available.

But in saying that councils do this, it is but another way of saying that the churches themselves do it. The churches do it by councils, which is the freest possible mode in which they can act. Being called by the parties interested, from such of the neighboring churches as they see fit to select, with no authority except upon the single case presented, if there is any danger, it is that a liberty so broad may degenerate into license. A standing central body, though elective, might become arbitrary and oppressive. But the fear of any combination or oppression by such councils, scattered, occasional, brief, is altogether groundless.

The action of such councils upon questions of church fellowship is simple in its nature, not cumbered with any technical forms that can obstruct it. The mode of calling and organizing them will be considered hereafter.

A church is usually admitted to fellowship at the time of its organization. Those proposing to become its members call a council of the churches in the neighborhood for that purpose. A church already organized, whether independent, or belonging to another denomination, upon adopting the Congregational faith, may call a council and be admitted the same as a new church. The work of the council is, to examine the necessity or feasibility of the proposed church, especially if it is a colony from an existing church; and also to examine its articles of faith, in order to see if it is essentially in harmony with the faith of the other churches.

A church is excluded from fellowship, when, after examination, a council refuses to admit it. Or, if previously admitted, it may be expelled, for sufficient cause. Thus, if one of the churches should essentially change its articles of faith, or fall into and justify practices that would bring dishonor upon the whole body of the churches, or persistently violate the mutual obligations of fellowship, any one of the neighboring churches may institute proceedings for a council, by stating the charges against such church, and proceeding *ex parte*, if a mutual council is not consented to. And a council so called may publicly withdraw from such church the fellowship of the other churches in the denomination.

Churches have fellowship not only with other churches, but also with ministers, as a body of men holding the sacred office of public religious teachers. A minister is admitted to the fellowship of the churches when he is ordained by a council. If he is to be ordained generally, in the ministerial office, without being installed as the pastor of any church, the church of which he is a member, or with which he is to labor, may call a council at his request. But if he is to be installed as the pastor of a church, the council is called by such church, and he is publicly recognized as having the fellowship of the churches, not only in his general office, as a minister of the Gospel, but in his particular office, as the pastor of that church.

A minister is excluded from such fellowship, by a council, in several ways. If a council is called to ordain or install him, and it refuses to do so, he is excluded from church fellowship as a minister, whether the council is called by the church of

which he is a member, or by some church of which he proposes to become the pastor. This may not affect his moral standing; for there are many good men who are not qualified, by education, or by soundness of doctrine, to be religious teachers. And if the church in such a case should disregard the advice of the council, and proceed to ordain him as its pastor, this would not make him a minister in the denomination, or give him any standing or right to fellowship as such. The church may elect and ordain its own pastor; but it can not impose a minister upon the denomination. And in thus proceeding independently, in a matter concerning which the other churches have a common interest, it would forfeit its own right to their fellowship, thus violated, and set at naught.

If a minister is already the pastor of a church, and is guilty of any misconduct, or changes his religious views, the church, or parish, or any member of either, may take measures for calling a council; and if the council finds such charges to be true, and advises his dismissal for that reason, he is thereby excluded from the fellowship of the churches.

If he is not the pastor of any church, and does not propose to be, any member of any church or parish where he preaches, or proposes to preach, may commence proceedings for a council, in the same way, and for the same causes, as if he were the settled minister or pastor.

Thus, though there is in the Congregational system no established, uniform mode of deposing a minister from his office, still, if he claims to exercise his official functions, he may be publicly excluded from church fellowship, by which the same result is substantially secured. If he voluntarily abandons the office, there may be no necessity for any formal, public deposition.

The admission of ministers to associations, and of churches to conferences, or their expulsion from such organizations, is entirely independent of any proceedings of councils; though, as before stated, the action of the latter precedes that of the former; and reasons that would require action by the latter, would usually be regarded as sufficient to justify corresponding action by the former.

IV. PARISH AND CHURCH. Our fathers derived the idea of their ecclesiastical system from that of England. They had felt the crushing weight of the Establishment; but they supposed that to be the result of certain abuses and practices engrafted upon it, rather than inherent in it. Hence they took it as the basis of their own polity, divesting it of its forms, and external symbols, and of its patrons, and bishops, and giving to each local church the right of self-government, including the election of its own pastor. These changes were great, and some of them radical. But they were accompanied with such limitations that they created a colonial Establishment, much after the English pattern, except that one was Episcopal, while the other was Congregational.* It is necessary to bear this in mind in studying the legal history of Congregationalism; for it involved the necessity of many subsequent changes in usage, and in statute law, before complete religious freedom was established.

In England, the whole country was divided into territorial parishes. Such a parish was "that circuit of ground which was committed to the charge of one parson, vicar, or other minister having the cure of souls," to whom all persons residing within the parochial limits were obliged to pay their tithes, or taxes.†

The same system, except in the election of the minister, was established by the first settlers in New England. The colony was divided into territorial parishes, the inhabitants of which were compelled by law to maintain public worship.‡ And this was done by general taxation, in the same way that other taxes were assessed. The boundaries of towns and parishes being usually the same, the town and parish taxes were generally raised at the same meeting. And the right of voting was at first restricted to church-members. In Massachusetts, in 1665, provision was made for giving it, on personal application to the general court, to such other freeholders as should present certificates from their respective ministers, that they were "orthodox in their religion, and not vicious in their lives."§

At first, while a large proportion of the colonists were mem-

* Oakes v. Hill, 10 Pick. (Mass.) 333.

† 1 Black. Com. 112.

‡ Colony Laws, ch. 39, secs. 17, 18; Province Laws, ch. 13.

§ Colony Laws, ch. 49.

bers of the churches, holding the same faith, the unequal operation of such provisions was less severely felt. But when the number of inhabitants increased, and different religious views prevailed, the free spirit of the times began to make itself felt. The right of suffrage was extended, and the whole parish system began to be modified. Special statutes were enacted from time to time, exempting Quakers and Anabaptists from taxation.* The taxes paid by "members of the church of England" were appropriated to the support of their own ministers.† And, in 1799, the same provision was made for other denominations.‡ This right was still further extended by a subsequent statute; § but so slow was the progress, that it was not until 1833,|| that compulsory taxation for the support of religion was abolished in Massachusetts, though it already had been done in Maine, New Hampshire, and other States.

While the parish system was undergoing these changes in regard to taxation, it was at the same time being essentially modified in its general structure. The city of Boston had never been embraced in it.¶ "Probably because its numbers increased so rapidly, and it was so early found that more than one religious society would be necessary within its limits, it is believed that no attempt was ever made to organize the town as a parish, or to divide the territory into parishes. Religious societies were merely voluntary, freely formed and maintained by persons associated together for that purpose; and of course they were formed upon such views of doctrine and discipline, and professed and inculcated such religious doctrines and tenets of belief, as their own consciences and views of Christian truth dictated."***

It is natural to suppose that the metropolitan churches had a powerful influence upon the whole colony; and it is therefore surprising to find with what tenacity the system of territorial parishes maintained its hold. It continued to exist, because its

* Province Laws, ch. 333: Appendix (An. ch.) ch. 37.

† Province Laws, ch. 214.

‡ Laws of 1799, ch. 87.

§ Laws of 1811, ch. 6.

|| Amendments of Const. Art. 11.

¶ Province Laws, ch. 10, sec. 9; same, ch. 239, sec. 2.

*** Shaw C. J. in the Federal St. Meetinghouse case, 3 Gray (Mass.) 1.

friends made concessions from time to time, which relieved the people from its heaviest burdens. Besides the exemptions from taxation already noticed, "poll parishes" were incorporated in many towns, by special acts of the legislature, similar to those in Boston. The members of such parishes were either permitted by their charters to assess their own taxes; or, under the act of 1742, relating to Episcopalians, or the general act of 1799, their own ministers were allowed to draw the amount of their taxes from the parish treasury.

This last act was supposed to embrace all religious societies, whether incorporated by an act of the legislature, or not. And the minister of the Universalist Society in Falmouth, now Portland, not incorporated, brought a suit against the First Parish, to recover the amount of the taxes paid by certain members of his society. In 1810, the Supreme Court delivered an elaborate opinion adverse to his claim, holding that no society had this privilege unless it was incorporated.*

This decision led to the statute of 1811, giving to all voluntary religious societies, though not incorporated, substantially the same rights and powers as to incorporated societies.† And when, not many years later in Massachusetts, and even earlier in other States, compulsory taxation for religious purposes ceased, though territorial parishes had a nominal existence, and such as were endowed kept up their organizations, the old system was substantially swept away, and gave place to those voluntary religious societies, of every denomination, which, next to our common schools, if not more than they, are the pride and glory of New England.

These religious societies, or poll parishes, may be incorporated by special acts of the legislature. They are usually organized, however, without any special legislative act, under the general laws of the States in which they exist. Such a parish is defined by Chancellor Walworth as "a voluntary association of individuals or families, united for the purpose of having a common place of worship, and to provide a proper teacher to instruct them in religious doctrines and duties."‡

* *Barnes v. First Parish in Falmouth*, 6 Mass. 401.

† *Holbrook v. Holbrook*, 1 Pick. (Mass.) 248.

‡ *Baptist church v. Witherell*, 3 Paige (N.Y.) 296.]

It is sufficient to refer to the statutes of the several States, which do not differ very materially, for an understanding of the powers and rights of such parishes, the manner in which their proceedings may be conducted, the mode of calling their meetings, and choosing their officers. In general, it may be said, that no person can become a member of a parish without its consent, given expressly, or by its written constitution, or by-laws;* it has power to take and hold property, real and personal; to raise money, by taxation, upon pews, or otherwise, for the purpose of maintaining public worship;† to erect a house for that purpose, or for a parsonage, and to keep it in repair;‡ and to do any and all other acts that may be necessary in accomplishing the purposes of its organization. Like other corporations, it holds the legal title to its own property; and it may sue, and be sued, in its own name.

A church, unlike a parish, is not a corporation, unless by a special act of the legislature. It is an aggregate body of individuals, having no greater powers at common law than any other voluntary association.§ Its principal officers are its pastor and deacons. By a Provincial statute, enacted in 1754,|| which has since been adopted by most of the States, a church may take and hold property, real or personal, and the legal title vests in the deacons, and their successors, for the use of the church. By the same statute, property could be given to the minister, for the use of the church; or to the minister and his successors, for the support of the ministry.¶ In such case, he can not alienate the property, without the consent of the church, beyond his own term. And in case of a vacancy in any of the offices whose incumbents hold the church or parish property in trust, the equitable title continues in the church, or parish, while the legal title is in abeyance, to be revived when the vacancy is filled.** The church, in secular, as well as in

* *Sudbury v. Stearns*, 21 Pick. (Mass.) 148; *Lord v. Chamberlain*, 2 Greenl. (Me.) 67.

† *Mussey v. Bulfinch St. Soc.* 1 Cush. (Mass.) 148. Province Laws, ch. 259, sec. 3.

‡ *Dillingham v. Snow*, 5 Mass. 547; *Presbyterian Soc. v. Quackenbush*, 10 Johns. (N. Y.) 217.

§ *Jefts v. York*, 10 Cush. (Mass.) 392.

|| Province Laws, ch. 259.

¶ *Emerson v. Wily*, 10 Pick. (Mass.) 317.

** *Brunswick v. Dunning*, 7 Mass. 445; *Jewett v. Burrows*, 15 Mass. 464.

spiritual affairs, acts by votes and majorities, not contracting in its own name, but authorizing its officers to act. And by the Massachusetts statute of 1785, ch. 51, since that time adopted in some other States, churches are empowered to choose committees to call their deacons and other officers to account.

In most of the judicial decisions in Massachusetts, it is assumed that in every parish, and indissolubly connected with it, there will be a church; and that every church will have its parish. This is not strictly correct. One is not legally essential to the existence of the other. There may be a parish without a church; and there not only may be, but there are, many churches not connected with parishes. Not only are there such churches connected with colleges, as suggested by Chief Justice Shaw,* and by Chief Justice Parker; † there are many such churches in the country, especially in the rural districts. Probably the number has largely increased since the organization of territorial parishes, to which these cases referred, has been generally given up. They are regularly organized as churches, with their deacons, and pastors; they maintain public worship, by voluntary contributions, in halls, or school-houses, or sometimes in meeting-houses, owned wholly or in part, by their own congregations; they own communion plate, and sometimes other property; but they are not, and never have been, connected with any organized parishes. That such churches have the same right of organization and discipline as others, and may, by their officers, take and hold property for religious uses, would seem to be too clear to be questioned.

Still it is true that, in most cases, a church, at the time of its organization, or afterwards, gathers around itself a congregation, which is organized as a parish or religious society. It is in this connection, generally, that property is held, and contracts are made. And now, as formerly, it is in their mutual relations and rights, generally, that they come under the notice of courts of law or equity.

It is also true, in accordance with the cases previously cited, as the law is now settled, that when a church is once connected with a legally organized parish, the bond is indissoluble. The

* *Stebbins v. Jennings*, 10 Pick. (Mass.) 172.

† *Baker v. Fales*, 16 Mass. 493.

parish may, indeed, be dissolved, and cease to exist, by the unanimous vote of its members, or by the withdrawal of the whole of them; though not, necessarily, by ceasing for several years to keep up its organization by a choice of officers.* And in case of a dissolution of the parish, the church may connect itself with another or a new parish.† But so long as the parish exists, the church can have no legal existence except in connection with it. A separation of it from the parish, by its members, extinguishes its identity. The same persons may thus form a new church. But a church afterwards organized within the parish, by reason of its identity therewith, is, in law, the same church.‡ Whether the other churches will recognize it as the same, is a matter of discretion with them, to be determined according to the fairness of the proceedings, and the justice of the case.

This results, in part, from the fact that churches and religious societies may, and often do, receive gifts and legacies which would fail of their object, in case of a separation. For, unlike joint stock companies, and business corporations, they hold property in trust, not for the members, but for certain uses, to effectuate which it is necessary to prevent a dissolution. And though a church or parish might distribute again among its members, or give to any other person, money contributed by them, or held not for any designated use; property held for such use must be appropriated accordingly. And if the use is a charitable or religious one, there are appropriate remedies in equity, if seasonably resorted to, to compel the execution of the trust.§

The deacons or minister hold the legal title to property belonging to the church, in trust, for its use, with no power to dispose of it without the consent of the church. If it is property given for the support of public worship, the church, by its officers, holds it in trust for the parish. If any other use, or no use, is designated, the parish, as such, has no interest in it, and the *jus disponendi* is entirely in the church.||

* *Oakes v. Hill*, 14 Pick. (Mass.) 442; *Fernald v. Lewis*, 6 Maine 264.

† *Tibballs v. Baldwin*, 1 Gray (Mass.) 399.

‡ *Sawyer v. Baldwin*, 11 Pick. (Mass.) 492.

§ *Attorney General v. Federal Street Meeting-house*, 3 Gray (Mass.) 1.

|| *Parker v. May*, 5 Cush. (Mass.) 336.

But if the church undertakes to separate from the parish, though the pastor, and all the officers and members, secede, and worship in a different place, it thereby becomes a new church, and forfeits all its property, for whatever purpose held, to the church which may afterwards be organized within such parish, which, for all civil purposes, is the same church.* The withdrawal of the pastor and a portion of the church to another place of worship, does not, of itself, constitute a secession that will work a forfeiture of the property. It is only evidence tending to prove it. In any case of controversy, it is a question of fact, to be decided by the jury, depending upon the intention of those who withdraw.†

The property of a parish, like that of a church, is usually held in trust, for some specified use. Thus, either money, or lands, may be held for the support of the ministry.‡ So land may be held for the use of the pewholders in a church.§ The meeting-house, if owned by the parish, is thus held, the pewholder having but an easement, though he has the right to an exclusive possession, at least during the time when the house is occupied for public worship.|| He may therefore maintain an action of trespass against any one who disturbs him in his possession.¶ The parish, however, may take down the house, in order to rebuild. If it has become so old and ruinous as to render this course necessary, the pewholder is entitled to no indemnity.** But if it is taken down as a matter of taste, or convenience, and not of necessity, the pewholder is entitled to compensation.†† Provision is probably now made by statute for such cases, in nearly all the States.

A parish may abandon its meeting-house, and build another, without any liability to indemnify pewholders, though such

* *Baker v. Fales*, 16 Mass. 488; *Page v. Crosby*, 24 Pick. (Mass.) 211.

† *First Baptist Church v. Rouse*, 21 Conn. 161.

‡ *Peckham v. Haverhill*, 19 Pick. (Mass.) 559; *Richardson v. Brown*, 5 Greenl. (Me.) 355.

§ *Congregational soc. v. Waring*, 24 Pick. (Mass.) 304.

|| *Jackson v. Rounseville*, 5 Met. (Mass.) 127.

¶ *Shaw v. Beveridge*, 3 Hill (N. Y.) 26; *Price v. Lyon*, 14 Conn. 281.

** *Wentworth v. Canton*, 3 Pick. (Mass.) 344; *Howard v. N. Bridgewater*, 7 Pick. 137.

†† *Gay v. Baker*, 17 Mass. 435; *Gorton v. Hadsell*, 9 Cush. (Mass.) 508; *Kellogg v. Dickinson*, 18 Verm. 266.

house has not become unfit to be used for public worship. But if the parish should sell the house, the pewholders will be entitled to share in the proceeds of the sale.

Election of Pastor. If a church is not connected with a parish, its right to choose its own pastor is necessarily exclusive. If it is connected with an organized parish, either it has the exclusive right to nominate or elect its pastor, subject to the approval of the parish; or the right of election is exclusively in the parish. This depends upon the constitution or the laws of the State in which the church is located.

Notwithstanding our forefathers divided the country into territorial parishes, generally coincident with towns, all the inhabitants of which were taxed to support the ministry, they provided by law, in 1641, that the church should have the right to elect the pastor. And afterwards, in 1668, to prevent any misunderstanding of its meaning, it was enacted that, "by the church is to be meant such as are in full communion only."* In this election the town or parish had no voice. It was bound to support the person chosen and ordained by the church.

As the number of persons increased who were not members of any church, there must have been considerable dissatisfaction with the law. For in 1692 an act was passed giving the right to choose the minister to "the major part of the inhabitants in any town." This, however, was found to be impracticable, for the reason that many of the larger towns had been divided into several parishes. And therefore in 1693, it was enacted "that each respective gathered church, in any town or place within the province, shall have power to choose its own minister; and the major part of such inhabitants as do there usually attend public worship, and are by law duly qualified for voting in town affairs, concurring with the church's act, the person thus elected and approved, accepting thereof, and settling with them, shall be the minister," etc.†

Under this statute there were probably cases of disagreement between churches and parishes. For in 1695 another act was passed, providing that, in case of such disagreement, the church might "call in the help of a council, consisting of the elders

* Colony Laws, ch. 39, secs. 4, 19.

† Province Laws, ch. 16.

and messengers of three or five neighboring churches," to hear and examine the objections to the church's election. If such council approved of the choice made by the church, the person so chosen was to be the minister. If not, it was the duty of the church to proceed to another election, which also was to be submitted to the parish, and, in case of disagreement, to another council.*

So the law remained for nearly a century, so long as the Provincial government continued. But when the government was changed, by the adoption of the Massachusetts Constitution in 1780, the right of election was given exclusively to parishes. This was not in consequence of any dissatisfaction with the law as it had been. Indeed, it seems hardly to have been known that the law was changed until many years afterwards. The change is attributed by Chief Justice Parker to the influence of certain prominent members of the Brattle Street Society in Boston, who were members of the Convention. It seems to have been done without opposition, perhaps without knowledge that any such change was intended; and from Massachusetts it has been adopted by the other New England States. So that, whenever a church is connected with an organized parish, whatever the usage may be, unless otherwise provided in the parish by-laws, the parish has the exclusive right to elect the minister, without regard to the action of the church.†

In fact, however, there have seldom any difficulties grown out of this change. Among the Congregationalists, the church usually composes no small part of the parish, so that the two bodies will rarely differ. The provision for the support of the minister must necessarily be made by the parish. And though the usage still continues for the church to elect the pastor, subject to the approval of the parish, the connection of the two bodies is such, and the identity of members so great, that the action of the one is almost always satisfactory to the other.

It would be well, however, in order to prevent any controversies between parishes and churches, for the parish, in its rules and by-laws, to provide for their joint action upon all such matters as are likely to arise. These will embrace the call-

* Province Laws, ch. 33.

† Baker v. Fales, 16 Mass. 488.

ing and settlement of pastors; the mode of providing for their support; the supply of the pulpit during the sickness or absence of the pastor, or during any vacancy in the pastorate; and the mode, time, and frequency of public worship. As all parishes are authorized to adopt such rules and by-laws, and usually do so, in regard to their own business proceedings, terms of membership, and other such matters,* they may save much difficulty, possibly, by providing for all cases in which the action of both the church and the parish may be required.†

V. MINISTERS AND PASTORS. We have already seen that our forefathers at first established the territorial parish system of the English church, with its illiberal principle of compulsory taxation for the support of the ministry. We have also seen how that system was gradually changed and modified by the prevailing spirit of freedom, until our present system of voluntary religious societies, for the support of which no one can be taxed without his consent, has become universal in this country. The former was an offshoot of the old Establishment. The latter is one that has grown up with the progress of civil and religious liberty, by which it has been moulded into its present form.

In regard to the church and the ministry, if the views of the Pilgrims were more liberal, they were far more crude and indefinite. They rejected entirely the idea of any ministerial office, other than that of the actual pastor of the local church. Hence, if a pastor was dismissed, he thereby ceased to be a minister. And if he was settled afterwards over another church, he was ordained again as before, by the laying on of hands. As he was merely an officer of the church, and nothing more, he was not only elected, but ordained by the church. That this was the general usage, for at least the first fifty years of the colonial history, can not be denied; though it is equally clear that the usage did not continue.

In theory they held to several grades of church officers; and in fact they had deacons, ruling elders, and the teaching elder or pastor. They sometimes had a teacher beside the pastor.

* Taylor v. Edson, 5 Cush. (Mass.) 522.

† For forms, see *Cong. Quarterly*, 1864, Vol. VI., p. 330.

This system of semi-presbyterianism, in the ruling eldership, prevailed for a long time. The right of the ruling elders to negative any action of the church was claimed for nearly a century; but the office was finally given up, and the right of the body of the members to manage their own affairs was at last conceded.

The early statutes speak of ruling elders, and teaching elders. In ordaining their pastors, and their deacons, it was the ruling elders, if there were such, who performed the ceremony of laying on hands. Thus, out of the theory that each church should have its ruling elders, and that the pastor was nothing but the mere local officer of the church, there originated usages in the government of the church, and in the ordination of its officers, which prevailed for some time, but which were modified or abandoned, as experience, and the progress of free principles, dictated from time to time.

This fact is sometimes forgotten when it ought to be remembered. The fathers brought with them into this country the germ of Congregationalism, mixed, indeed, with much that they afterwards threw off as an incumbrance. It could not be otherwise. Their principles of church government were necessarily theoretical, and liable to be modified by practical experience. Planted in a new country, their development was a work of time. So Congregationalism began, when the churches were few, feeble, and scattered. It has grown up with them, from a crude, indefinite theory, changed from time to time by their experience and wisdom, until it has become a symmetrical, orderly, liberal system. Its best days were not its earliest, when it was in its infancy, laying its foundations, testing its principles. It was by this very process that some theories were rejected, and some usages were abandoned; and it would be folly in us now to take them for our guides, rather than the usages and principles that have stood the test of time, and are commended to us by the wisdom and piety of the past hundred years.

Still, to understand the present, it is well to look at the past, and trace the growth and progress of the system into its present form.

The Pilgrims were led by the evils which they had seen, or

supposed they had seen, resulting from a regular order of priesthood, or clergy, in the Roman Catholic and Episcopal churches, to reject the idea of any such office, or any class of public religious teachers. They believed only in the local pastorate; and they held that each church had the right to elect its own pastor, without dictation or advice from any patron, bishop, synod, presbytery, or other person or body whatever. But in regard to the office itself, and the rights, duties, and powers of the incumbent, there was very little difference between them and the Established church.

The relation between the pastor and the church or parish was not a contract for service, for any period of time, definite, or indefinite. It was an office, to which the incumbent was elected, and inducted, according to the usages of the denomination. As the pastor and minister, he represented the church and the parish, in both temporal and spiritual affairs, the same as the parson or rector in the English church.

"A parson, (*ecclesiæ persona*,) is one that hath full possession of all the rights of the parochial church. He is called the parson because by his person the church is represented; and he is, in himself, a body corporate, in order to defend its rights by a perpetual succession. He is sometimes called the rector, or governor of the church; but the appellation of parson is the most legal, most beneficial, and most honorable title that a parish priest can enjoy. A parson has, during his life, the freehold in himself of the parsonage, the glebe, the tithes, and other dues."^{*}

Such was the English law; and such, substantially, was the pastoral relation, as established by the Congregationalists in this country. The Province was divided into parishes or towns, in each of which was generally reserved or appropriated one lot of land, or more, to the use of the ministry. This was the glebe; and upon it, usually, the parsonage was erected. By the statute of 1754, previously cited, the ministers were each constituted a body corporate, for the purpose of taking and holding such property by a perpetual succession.† Like the English

^{*} Blackstone Com. 384.

† *Weston v. Hunt*, 2 Mass. 500; *Brown v. Porter*, 10 Mass. 93; *Bucksport v. Porter*, 12 Maine, 487; *Pawlet v. Clark*, 9 Cranch (U. S.) 292.

parson, he had the freehold of such property in himself. And as the tenure of his office, unless limited by special stipulations, was for life, he had a life estate in all such lands.* If he was dismissed for any cause, and the relation between him and the parish was dissolved, of course his estate terminated, and the title went to his successor.

And as it was made the imperative duty of every town to support the ministry, the taxes assessed and collected for that purpose belonged to the settled minister for the time being, just as the tithes and other dues belonged to the English parson. We have already seen how this law was afterwards modified from time to time, until all compulsory taxation was finally abolished.

But though the law relating to the support of the ministry has been so essentially changed, the nature and tenure of the pastoral office are still substantially the same as at the first. It is a public office, to which the incumbent is to be regularly elected; and his rights, duties, powers, and liabilities, are all well defined by established principles of law. As has been stated, the legal tenure of the office is during life. There is no law, however, which prohibits the parties from making any contract they please, when a minister is settled, in regard to the time during which the relation shall continue, or in regard to the mode or conditions of its dissolution. In such case the contract is the law by which the parties are bound.

The salary of the minister is entirely a matter of contract; though if he should be settled without any stipulated sum, he would be entitled to a reasonable compensation. The usual course is for the parish, by a vote, to fix the salary in advance, and afterwards from year to year, if any change is desired; and the minister by accepting the call, and by remaining, is presumed to assent to it. Unless the parties have otherwise stipulated, by a special contract, which they may do,† the minister is entitled to his salary until he is dismissed from his office. If he is prevented by the parish from performing the duties of his office, that will not defeat his right to his salary.‡ The proper

* *Avery v. Tyringham*, 3 Mass. 160; *Burr v. Sandwich*, 9 Mass. 277.

† *Dutch church v. Bradford*, 8 Cowen (N. Y.) 457.

‡ *Thompson v. Rehoboth*, 5 Pick. (Mass.) 469.

course, in case of difficulty, is for the parish to take measures to dissolve the relation, either with a council, or without one, as circumstances may require.

By the Colonial and Province laws, the pastor of a church connected with a parish was in all cases the minister of the parish. Of the flock embraced within the church, he was the shepherd, watching over them in their conduct, instructing, advising, and if necessary reproving, or calling them to account. Of the whole town or parish he was the religious teacher, as a minister of the Gospel.

In the English church, the clergy constituted a class or order of men, set apart to the work of preaching the Gospel, by admission to the sacred office of the ministry. By a canon of the church, no one was ordained until he had received an appointment or "presentation," over some particular parish. But he was ordained in such case, not over such parish or church, but to the office of the ministry generally. By "institution" he was invested with the spiritual or ministerial office. By "induction" he was invested with the temporalities of the particular parish or church over which he was appointed.* The ceremony of institution was performed by the bishop, the neighboring clergymen also generally being present in the concluding services, and uniting in the laying on of hands.†

So long as our ancestors rejected the idea of any ministerial office, and held to nothing but the local pastorate, they were consistent in holding, also, that each church should ordain, as well as elect, its pastor; and that a pastor should be ordained again, if transferred from one church to another. The right of a church to ordain "its own officers" was established by law, and was distinctly recognized in the Savoy Confession, and in the Cambridge Platform. The early usage, with some exceptions, conformed to this; and though councils of the neighboring churches were called, having power even to prevent the "ordination of any teaching elder," or to prohibit any one from "preaching,"‡ yet, if they "approved" of such ordination, the laying on of hands was usually performed by the ruling elders, or if there were none, by some eminent members of the church.

* 1 Burn. Eccl. 153; 1 Black. Com. 390.

† Cyclopaedia of Rel. Denominations, Episcopal ch., 7.8.

‡ Colony Laws, 1658, ch. 39, sec. 13.

This practice, however, soon began to be departed from, because the doctrine that was the foundation of it was no longer received by the churches. The belief that the New Testament Scriptures recognized the ministerial office, held by a class of men publicly set apart to the sacred work, laboring in whatever places they might be called from time to time, began to prevail extensively. This being the case, though each church might ordain its own officers, it was evident that no one church could ordain a man to the ministry generally. In other words, the doctrine of the English church, in regard to the ministerial office, was again received. And it was believed that, as held by that church, though no man ought to be ordained to the sacred office without at the same time being inducted or installed as the pastor of some church, yet every pastor should be ordained as a minister in the denomination. This could be done only by the churches themselves, acting in a council called for that purpose. And though there has been, and still may be, much controversy on the subject, the fact that both the doctrine and the usage of the churches were thus changed, before the close of the seventeenth century, no one will deny. An Independent church may ordain its own pastor; or, rather, it must do it. But a Congregational church can not do it; for it is now an established principle of the denomination, that no one should be settled as a pastor who is not, or has not been, ordained to the ministerial office, and, in that relation, admitted to the fellowship of the churches. This can be done only by the churches, in a council. For an ordination, in order to be legally valid, must be according to the existing usages of the denomination to which the minister belongs.*

Nor is there any danger that this can interfere with the liberty of the churches. Not only may each church become Independent, and then elect and ordain its own pastor; without becoming Independent, its exclusive right to "elect" its own pastor is conceded. Ordination always follows an election, and would be of no force without an election. No council, or other church, ever claims even to advise in regard to such an election. Its extreme power is merely a negative one, that of saying to a church: "We can not ordain as a minister the person whom

* *Commonwealth v. Spooner*, 1 Pick. (Mass.) 235.

you have chosen as a pastor." The right of the churches to decide this question, no one can doubt. A council never claims any right to impose a pastor upon a church. It must be equally clear that no church can claim the right to impose a minister upon the denomination. The cases of difference are extremely rare. But when one does occur, the church should at once accept the decision of the council, and proceed to the choice of some other person as pastor; or it should become Independent, and no longer claim the fellowship of the other churches.

In an Independent church, no particular form or ceremony is requisite in ordaining its pastor. "His acceptance of the call and consequent entry upon the duties of the office are all that we have in this country resembling the presentation, admission, and induction of the English church."* And, indeed, as between a church and its pastor, in any controversy, the same rule would apply to any church, whether Independent or not. The call of the one, and the acceptance and entry upon the office by the other, legally establishes the relation between them, with the usual mutual rights and obligations resulting from it.

But in order to give one the character and standing of a minister in any denomination, or to confer upon him the legal rights of such a minister, except as between him and his church or parish, he must be ordained according to the usages of such denomination. The statutes of different States having given to ordained ministers the power to solemnize marriages in certain cases, in order to exercise such power the minister must have been ordained in the usual way practiced by the denomination.† And such an ordination is always requisite to a recognition as a minister in regular standing in the denomination.

It may be said, therefore, that "a minister of the Gospel" is a public religious teacher, ordained and recognized as such according to the usages of the denomination to which he belongs. It is not indispensable that he should have authority to administer the sacraments; for in some denominations a large part of their ministers do not have such authority.‡ Nor is it

* *Youngs v. Ransom*, 31 Barb. S. C. (N. Y.) 49.

† *Commonwealth v. Spooner*, ante.

‡ *Baldwin v. McClinch*, 1 Maine, 102.

necessary, in order to make one an "ordained minister," that he be ordained over any particular church or society. For, in most denominations, persons are sometimes ordained to the ministry generally, without being placed over any church or parish. This is done occasionally by Congregationalists; though the practice is now generally condemned, except in some cases, not often occurring, in which there may be some special reason for it.

"A stated and ordained minister" is one who is ordained and settled as the pastor of some particular church, or churches.*

A "stated supply" is one who has been previously ordained, and who is temporarily employed by some church or parish, without being installed. He is sometimes called the "acting pastor," just as one in military or civil life sometimes acts in an office which he does not hold. An acting pastor has no rights as such, except in regard to the church by which he is employed. So far as other churches are concerned, he has no claim to recognition until installed, according to the denominational usage.

The usage of the Congregational churches in the settlement of ministers has now been uniform for a long period of time. After the church has elected one to be its pastor, and he has been "called," it invites a council of "the neighboring churches," with which it is in fellowship, to advise in regard to the matter. This was provided for by statute as early as 1658. It was said by Chief Justice Parker, in the case of *Baker v. Fales*, that "this was probably the origin of councils called to aid in the ordination of ministers; and it was their business to inquire into the qualifications of the candidate, and probably into his theological creed, in order that no new or strange doctrines might interrupt the uniformity of faith then existing, and thought to be essential."† But this was not the origin of such councils; for they had been called in such cases, from the first settlement of the country. The ordination at Salem in 1638 is often referred to in proof that churches ordained their own pastors. But a council was called in that case; and though the members were detained by a storm, they arrived in season

* *Ligonía v. Buxton*, 2 Maine, 102.

† 16 Mass. 515.

to participate in the closing services, and to extend to the pastor the fellowship of the churches, in the same manner as is now practiced among us.

When the council approves of the settlement of the person elected as pastor of a church, they so report to the church. In that case, after advising with the church, or its officers, they proceed to ordain the candidate as a minister and pastor, or to install him as pastor, if he has been previously ordained; and in each of those offices they publicly admit him to the fellowship of the churches.

If one is called that has been previously ordained by a council, and who is therefore already a recognized minister in the denomination, it may be asked why he can not be installed by the church, or enter upon the pastorate without any formal installation. Such is the practice in some denominations. But the usage of the Congregational churches has always been different. "The neighboring churches," from which both law and usage required a council to be called, have always been consulted in cases of installation, as much as in cases of original ordination. The frequent changes of opinion among ministers have proved the necessity for such a rule. When a minister is transferred from one church to another in the same neighborhood, his examination by a council will be generally a matter of form. But if, as is more frequently the case, one is called from a distance, the churches near where he is to be settled have an interest in knowing what are his qualifications and doctrinal views, before he is admitted to a position which will entitle him to appear in their pulpits, and to receive the courtesies of social intercourse in their families. Therefore the decision of a council called to install a pastor is of the same force as the decision of an ordaining council.

The pastoral relation, in fact, usually continues only so long as it is satisfactory to both of the parties. If it becomes otherwise, it is generally alike for the interest of both to have it dissolved. But if there are no special stipulations at the time of the settlement, limiting the time of its continuance, or providing for the conditions or mode of dissolving it, it may continue during life, at the option of the pastor, unless he forfeits it.*

* *Whitney v. Brooklyn*, 5 Conn. 495.

And as there may be some cases in which a minister is justified in asserting and claiming his legal rights, or the parish is justified in claiming its rights, it is important to understand what they are.

There are three grounds or causes of forfeiture of the pastoral office, which are distinctly recognized by law. If either one of these exists, the church or parish may dissolve the relation, whether the pastor consents or not, as they all relate to his fitness for the place. Whether a council is necessary, to examine and determine whether either of the causes exists, will depend upon circumstances which will be stated.

1. Immoral or criminal conduct on the part of the minister will create a forfeiture of his office, and render him liable to be dismissed by the parish. Any criminal conduct is sufficient; so also is any immoral conduct, such as lying, intemperance, or unchaste behavior, though not subject to any criminal prosecution.* So disloyalty to the government was held to be a good cause for dismissal, though no illegal or criminal act was charged.†

2. A wilful neglect of duty will work a forfeiture of the office. Thus, a wilful omission to preach, without any sufficient excuse, or a refusal to administer the ordinances, or to perform other usual and important parochial duties, is a good cause for dismissal.‡

3. So is an essential change in doctrinal belief. The change, however, must be substantial, such as would compel the parishioners, if the minister should remain, and preach his sentiments, to hear doctrines which they do not believe.§

How shall it be determined whether either of these causes for dismissal exists, in any case?

In New York the courts of law will not try any such question. They hold that it should be submitted to whatever ecclesiastical tribunal is provided in the denomination to which the minister belongs. "His obligations and duties partake so largely of a religious and moral character, and are so intimately connected with the relations of domestic life, that an inquiry

* *Thompson v. Rehoboth*, 5 Pick. (Mass.) 469.

† *Fuller v. Princeton*, cited in 3 Mass. 183.

‡ *Sheldon v. Easton*, 24 Pick. (Mass.) 281.

§ *Burr v. Sandwich*, 9 Mass. 277.

into charges of misconduct ought to be of ecclesiastical cognizance. To expose the infidelity or immorality of a minister of the Gospel, on a public trial before a court and jury, in an action for his salary; or to conduct an inquiry into the soundness of his faith and religious opinions before a court of justice, would tend to produce unfavorable impressions of religion upon the public mind, and, in aggravated cases, would often scandalize the public ministry of the Gospel, so important to the well-being of society.* Substantially the same views were expressed by Chief Justice Hosmer of Connecticut.† But in Massachusetts, while it is said that "an ecclesiastical council alone has jurisdiction of the third cause of forfeiture," a change in doctrinal belief, "and is manifestly the most proper tribunal for the investigation of the other two causes," yet, upon the other two, "a parish may act without the intervention of a council."‡ Until the parish does act, by a vote of dismissal, the minister is entitled to his salary. And it is essential that the reason for the dismissal should be specifically stated by the parish; for no other reason can be alleged or proved.§

So that, in an action by a minister for his salary, if the parish allege a forfeiture of the office, and a dismissal from it, for either of the first two causes, the court will try the question, if it has not been submitted to a council. If it has been duly submitted to and decided by a council, its decision is conclusive, and the court will not try the question again.|| And the third cause of forfeiture must, in all cases, be submitted to a council, whose decision is conclusive.

It can hardly be necessary to say that the decision of a council is conclusive only in civil suits between the minister and the parish. If a minister is charged with crime, before a court of law, the question is tried independently; and the action of a council would not even be admissible in evidence.

Cases in which ministers are dismissed for misconduct are of very rare occurrence. Though changes are frequent, and pastorates are often brief, the causes of dismissal are generally

* Jones, Chancellor, in *Dutch church v. Bradford*, 8 Cowen, (N. Y.) 505.

† *Whitney v. Brooklyn*, 5 Conn. 414.

‡ *Sheldon v. Easton*, ante.

§ *Thompson v. Rehoboth*, ante; *Whitmore v. Plymouth*, 2 Gray (Mass.) 308.

|| *Hollis Street Meeting-House v. Pierpont*, 7 Met. 495.

not such as affect the moral character of the pastor. He resigns his office on account of his health; or because of the inability or neglect of the parish to pay his salary; or for the reason that he has been called to some other place. These and other like reasons are in most cases the causes of dissolving the relation. It is sometimes done, by mutual consent, without calling a council; but such a course is irregular, and should never be pursued. The action of a council is essential to the subsequent good standing of the minister. If he is dismissed without any fault on his part, this fact is always stated by the council, and he is recommended to the churches. A minister dismissed without such recommendation is liable to have his standing called in question.

VI. ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCILS. A council is a meeting of several designated churches, by their pastors, or delegates, or both, to consult, and advise or determine upon some specific matter, for which they are called together by letters missive. This definition does not include consociations acting as standing councils. Such bodies can hardly be called Congregational; and they have never been generally approved in the denomination.

A council differs from all conferences, consociations, or conventions, though such bodies have sometimes been called councils, in that it is never called for general purposes, but always for some special purpose; and also in the fact that it is never a voluntary meeting of the churches, but is always by an invitation from parties interested in some particular question to be submitted. It is therefore never a standing or permanent body. When it has acted upon the matter for which it is called, its powers are exhausted, and it can no longer exist.

A council may be called by any one of the churches, in a proper case for it; or it may be called by any member of a church, in any matter relating thereto which is proper for a council; or it may be called by any parish connected with a church.

Councils are of three kinds in respect to the parties calling them.

1. A council may be called when there is but one party to the matter for a hearing. Such is a council called to organize

a church. The proposed members could organize themselves into an Independent church. But if they wish to be organized into a church in fellowship with the other churches, they invite them to meet in a council for that purpose.

If a portion of the members of an existing church should desire to be organized into a separate church, and the parties were not agreed, it could be done only by a mutual or an *ex parte* council. But as cases of this kind rarely occur, such councils are usually called by one party, composed of those who propose to be the members of the new church.

So a council to ordain or install a pastor is usually invited by the church by which he has been called. The candidate is, indeed, interested. And as he is consulted by the church, and consents to the proceedings, he is equally bound by the result. But he is not a party to the invitation sent to the churches.

A council to ordain one to the work of the ministry, generally, may be called by the church of which he is a member, or by any church by which he is employed as a stated supply. Or perhaps, if the candidate is to be a foreign missionary, any church might call a council for his ordination.

2. A mutual council is called when there are two parties to the matter which is to be submitted, and they agree upon the churches which are to be invited.

3. If there are two parties in controversy, in any matter proper for a council, and they do not agree upon a mutual council, either party may call one alone, which is an *ex parte* council. But before he can call such a council, there must be an offer of a mutual council to the other party, and a refusal or neglect to accept the offer.*

In mutual councils, any objection to any person agreed upon as a member is waived. And though the parties would not know whom any church would choose as a delegate, they would be presumed to know that the pastor would be a delegate *ex officio*. They would therefore be considered as agreeing upon the pastors. But in an *ex parte* council, as the other party waives nothing, the party calling it is bound to have it composed of persons who are impartial. If, therefore, any member

* Thompson v. Rehoboth, 7 Pick. (Mass.) 160.

has been upon a previous council, or for any other reason is not impartial, the decision of the council will be declared invalid.*

Councils are of two kinds in respect to the objects for which they are called.

1. A council may be called for some private matter, relating to the proceedings of some church concerning one or more of its members. In such cases, in which the other churches have no interest, the object of the parties is simply to obtain the council and advice of disinterested persons, in whose judgment and Christian character they have confidence.

2. A council may be called for some public matter, relating to the settlement of a pastor, or to his conduct, or his doctrinal belief; or relating to the general conduct or doctrine of a church. All the other churches in the denomination are interested in such a council. And it is obvious that in regard to its authority, and the importance and effect of its decision, these two kinds of councils will very greatly differ.

The object of councils of the first class is simply to restore peace and harmony between the particular parties who are at variance.

The design of councils of the second class, concerning matters of a public nature, is to maintain the purity, soundness and unity of faith, fellowship, and good order of the churches. They originated, and are continued, because of their necessity for the promotion of these objects. So long as churches are organized, and their pastors are settled, only with the advice and consent of the neighboring churches, they and their pastors will be likely to agree in their polity and doctrinal belief, and there will be no obstacle to a free interchange in membership, ministry and worship. And therefore, as was said by John Cotton, "though the church of a particular congregation be the first subject of all church power needful to be exercised within itself, and consequently be independent from any other church or synod in the use of it, yet it is a safe and wholesome and holy ordinance of Christ, for such particular churches to join together in holy covenant and communion and consolation among themselves, to administer all their church affairs which are of weighty and difficult common concernment, not without

common consultation and consent of the other churches about them." Such was the practice of the Pilgrims, which early received the sanction of the law. As has already been stated, as early as 1641 it was provided that no church would be recognized as such, unless the "neighbor churches" were called, and "approved" of its organization; and in 1658 the ordination of any teaching elder was prohibited, unless with the "approbation" of three or four of the "neighboring churches."* These laws, it is true, are no longer in force. But the usage has continued to this day; and the necessity for it, and its beneficial effect, in promoting the harmony, fellowship and influence of the churches are as apparent now as they were two hundred years ago.

There has always been a striking analogy between the two offices of religious and secular teachers. One of the earliest Province laws was "for the support of ministers and schoolmasters," in which contracts for the "settlement and maintenance" of both were confirmed.† The Bible has always been used in common schools. Both branches of learning have been taught in some of our colleges; and parishes have always had the capacity to take and hold property for the support of schools.‡ It was proper, therefore, that some provision should be made for the examination of both classes of teachers. And as, in our common school system, the proposed teacher must first be examined by the supervisor, committee, or other officers chosen for that purpose, so in the New England system of Congregationalism, he who would officiate as a public religious teacher or minister, is required by usage, as formerly by law, to be examined and approved by a council of the churches in the neighborhood where he is to be ordained or installed, to ascertain what are his qualifications and his doctrinal belief. This is as important for him as for them; for it is essential to his own peace, as well as usefulness, that his views should accord with theirs. If it were not so, there would soon be discord in his own society, and opposition to him in the other churches in the vicinity. No minister should be settled in whom the neighboring churches have not such confidence that, in ministerial exchanges, and in

* Colony Laws, ch. 39, sects. 1, 13.

† Province Laws, ch. 13, 1692.

‡ Sutton v. Cole, 3 Pick. (Mass.) 232; White v. Braintree, 13 Met. (Mass.) 506.

social intercourse, they can welcome him to their pulpits and their homes without distrust or fear.

Nor is any principle of Congregationalism, or of religious freedom, violated in this. It is but a law and condition of fellowship, which no church is bound to follow if it prefers Independency. Its own voluntary assent is necessary. And in giving its assent, it yields no more than what is indispensable to fellowship and good order. The system of councils is entirely different from any large, central judicatory, like a state or national Synod, or Assembly. These, though composed of representatives of the churches, might endanger or destroy their liberty. But a system of local councils can not. The power is merely temporary in each case, and is divided and distributed among all the churches in such a way as to give the freest possible scope to the popular will. The idea of any danger to their liberty, in thus using their own powers, in their separate localities, is altogether unfounded and visionary.

The danger, if any, is clearly in the other direction. Candidates for the ministry, instead of being rejected when they should be admitted, will, through the timidity of councils, be admitted when they ought to be rejected. Such has always been the tendency. It is plain, therefore, that the only security we have for anything like uniformity of doctrine and worship, which lies at the foundation of all fellowship and active coöperation among the churches, is in the authority and faithfulness of councils. To oppose them, or to do anything which will weaken their influence, or encourage a disregard for their decisions, while it will do nothing for the religious freedom of the churches, will do much to break them into discordant fragments, whose strength, instead of being put forth in united action to save the world, will be worse than wasted in mutual dissension and strife.

Calling a Council. A council is called by the invitation contained in the letters missive. This should set forth specifically the substance of the matter to be submitted; and it is, in its terms, the limit of the power of the council. The council assembles for that purpose, and for no other. An inquiry into any other matter is, therefore, as irregular as it is generally useless and improper.

The parties calling the council must determine to what particular churches to send the invitation. There is no absolute rule as to locality or number. If, however, the matter is of a public nature, in which the other churches are interested, the "neighboring churches," as being most directly interested, must be invited. If a council, after assembling, should find that this rule had been disregarded, unless some good reason could be given for it, it would probably decline to proceed. Or, if it should proceed, the neighboring churches would not feel bound by its action.

The invitation is sent to the churches. It is customary to inform each church what other churches are invited. This practice is a good one, though not essential to the legality of the council. If a church votes to accept the invitation, one lay delegate is chosen, the pastor being a delegate *ex officio*.

Sometimes a church invited has no pastor, but some one is preaching to the parish as a "stated supply," and there have been many cases in which he has attended councils as "acting pastor." This practice is of very doubtful propriety. For, as to the other churches, an acting pastor has no claim to be recognized as such. It is only the actual pastor who is a delegate of the church, by virtue of his office. And a church can elect no one as a delegate who is not a member.

It has sometimes been the case, also, that, besides the invitation to the churches, some prominent minister is invited by name, who is the pastor of some church, or, if not, is connected with some literary institution, or with some missionary or other society. This practice is also exceptional. If such person is the pastor of a church, there are strong reasons why the invitation should be sent to the church, in which case it could also be represented by a lay delegate. If the person is not a pastor, then he represents no church. If councils should be largely composed of such persons, which may be the case if they can be admitted at all, it would subvert the very foundation on which the whole system is based. The necessity and authority of councils can be sustained on Congregational principles only on the ground that the members are the representatives of the churches and sent by them.

If, in any case, the parties calling a council desire the attend-

ance of some particular member of another church, the suggestion of such wish would generally secure that result, without violating the freedom of the church in its choice.

It can hardly be necessary to say, that, in selecting the churches and their pastors to be invited, the parties calling a council have no right to invite any who are not in good standing and fellowship in the denomination; and if they should, the invitation can give no authority to any such person to act as a member of a council. The churches meet in a council, not simply because they are invited, but because, if it is for a matter of a public nature, in which they have an interest, they have a right to act. Such a council is a representative body, deriving its authority from the churches, though restricted in its action to the object for which it is called. It is the representative, as well as the guardian, of the fraternity of churches, associated in fellowship. Therefore any one excluded from their fellowship, or not admitted to it, can have no possible right, in any circumstances, to act as a member.

Proceedings of Councils. When a council is called, and assembles, it is necessary to ascertain who are members. The right to do this is inherent and indispensable in all such bodies. In order to do it, or to proceed to any other business, an organization is necessary. Like other deliberative bodies, or judicial tribunals composed of several persons, a council acts by a majority of those present.

In determining who are members, the council is restricted absolutely to the letters missive. It may question the right of those appearing by virtue of such letters; but it cannot give any right to others. It may diminish the number; it can never add to it. All votes inviting other persons present to act upon the council are simply void.

But if any one claims to be a member, as the pastor or delegate of any church, or as having been invited by a special letter to himself, the council, in determining who are members, may question his right to act. If he, as a minister, has never been admitted to, or has been excluded from, the fellowship of the churches, the invitation can give him no authority to act. So if he appears as a delegate from a church not in regular standing and fellowship in the denomination, the letter of invitation to such a church can not give its delegate or pastor any

right to act. So, if the matter to be submitted is one of controversy between contending parties, as a charge of misconduct made by a parish against its minister, and any one present is not impartial, unless the objection has been waived, he has no right to act. In all these cases, it is the right of the council to inquire into the fact, and declare that any such person is not entitled to a seat. It is true, it may have no civil power to enforce its decision. But it may proceed to act, without regarding the claim of such a person to participate in its deliberations. Indeed, in cases of controversy, it must do so. For, in such a case, the participation of any one not competent to act, will render the decision of the council void.* To deny the right of exclusion, is to deny any right to act at all.

This is in strict analogy to the proceedings of other similar bodies. If an infant, alien, or other person ineligible, is chosen one of a board of civil officers, the others, being a quorum, proceed without him. When a member of a court is incompetent to sit in any particular case, for the reason that he is related to one of the parties, or has formerly been consulted as counsel, he retires, and his associates proceed without him. So if any one claiming to be a member of a convention, or of a legislative body, is excluded, the remaining members proceed. A council, in some respects, resembles all these bodies, being both deliberative, and judicial. It is not a submission to an arbitration, in which all the arbitrators must be present, and act.† It is a public body, established by usage, and recognized by law; and the mode of calling it, and its rights, duties, and powers have been settled by many judicial decisions.

It often happens that some of the churches invited are not represented. If but a minority of them should be represented, it is probable that the delegates appearing would decline to act. But if a majority of the churches invited are represented, though some of them are not, they are considered as constituting a quorum; and it is the uniform usage for the council in such case to proceed.

Having determined who are members, in regard to which there is seldom any question, the particular matter to be sub-

* *Thompson v. Rebooth*, 7 Pick. (Mass.) 160.

† *Stearns v. Bedford*, 21 Pick. (Mass.) 114.

mitted, as set forth in the letters missive, should be examined, to see if it is a suitable one for a council. It is true, each church might decide this question for itself, before voting to send delegates. But, in doing so, there could be no concert of action among the churches. It is better, therefore, for all the churches to respond to the invitation, leaving it for the council to determine all these preliminary questions, as it can do, after consultation, more intelligently than the several churches could do beforehand.

The necessity that the council should settle any question of membership, and then determine whether the matter submitted is a proper one for a council, before proceeding to hear the parties, arises from the fact that both of these preliminary questions are always examined by the court, before the decision of the council can be received; and in either case, if any of the members were incompetent, or the matter was not suitable for a council, the decision will be rejected. "The court look behind the adjudication; and before the result can be received as evidence, or allowed to have any validity, they will examine the proceedings to ascertain (1) whether there was a suitable case for the convocation of an ecclesiastical council, (2) and whether the members were properly selected."*

Having completed its organization, and decided that the case is a suitable one for its action, the council proceeds to hear the parties. If the matter is one of controversy between contending parties, in which charges are made, the hearing is a judicial proceeding, and should be conducted upon substantially the same principles as in courts of justice. The charges should be stated in writing, in order that the party accused may know to what he is called to answer. This is also necessary, to enable the council to restrict and apply the evidence, and to determine and state in their result what the specific charges are, and whether they are proved. A council may disregard these principles, and proceed irregularly or disorderly; but it will do so at the risk of having its decision pronounced void.

If the matter to be heard is not one of controversy, but is a question of organizing a church, or of ordaining or installing a

* *Stearns v. Bedford*, 21 Pick. (Mass.) 125.

pastor, the proceedings may be more informal, according to the convenience of the parties, or the discretion of the council.

After fully examining or hearing all the persons or parties interested, the council proceeds as a deliberative body. In this, it is bound to regard the rules and forms of proceedings generally adopted by such bodies. These rules have received the public sanction because they tend to promote fairness, impartiality, and justice. To disregard them would impair the moral force of the result in all cases; and in cases subject to revision in courts of law, it would render the decision invalid. It is indispensable in every case that a council should proceed impartially.

After deliberation, the council decides. Their decision is technically called "the result." It should be a decision of the particular question submitted, and nothing more, nor less. It should be drawn up carefully, and signed by the moderator and scribe.

In all cases of controversy, in which specific charges are made, the council should find distinctly whether the charges are proved. This is necessary to protect the rights of the parties. For if the council finds that the charges are proved, their decision is conclusive in any civil suit between the parties. And, on the other hand, if the council finds that they are not proved, the party accused can not afterwards be harrassed by another trial, either before another council, or in any civil action between him and his accusers.

The necessity for having both the charges, and the decision of the council, definite, and certain, was shown in the case of *Sheldon v. Easton*.^{*} There the council was properly organized, and proceeded impartially; and it advised that the pastoral relation be dissolved, for certain reasons, the principal one of which was, that the pastor "had lost the confidence of a large portion of his parishioners in his moral honesty and integrity." But there were no charges of dishonesty, or of want of integrity; nor did the council decide that he was really guilty of anything of the kind; but only that his people had "lost confidence" in him in these respects. The charges and decision

^{*} 24 Pick. (Mass.) 281.

were declared to be too "vague and general" to sustain a dismissal by the parish.

There have been cases in which councils have determined the matters submitted to them, conditionally; that is, they have advised certain things to be done, upon certain conditions. This course may be proper in that class of cases where their decisions are merely advisory, and not legally binding upon either party. In such cases, the decision is not obligatory unless assented to and ratified by both of the parties;* and while a decision with conditions annexed, can do no harm, it may possibly result in an amicable adjustment. But in cases where there are charges of misconduct, the council should merely find specifically whether any of them are proved, and which, if not all. In the case of *Thompson v. Rehoboth*, there were such charges, and the council found that "several" of them were proved, without specifying which. And it was held that parol evidence to show which charges were proved was inadmissible; and that the decision of the council was void for uncertainty.†

Very few of the cases that are brought before councils are such as can afterwards be controverted at law. Nearly all councils are called to organize churches, or to ordain or install pastors, or to act upon questions of dismissal for causes not affecting the character or conduct of the parties. In all such cases, the particular form of stating the question upon which the council is to act, or its decision thereof, is a matter of little importance.

After the "result" is drawn up and signed, the powers of the council are exhausted, and it can do nothing but adjourn without day. The scribe should retain all the papers, with the result, which should be communicated to the parties by a copy. The original he should keep, that he may afterwards be able to furnish copies if they should be wanted.

Force of the Decision. As a general statement, it is often said that the decision of a council is merely advisory; and that the parties are still free to accept or reject the advice, as they, or either of them may choose. This statement is correct, as

* *Stearns v. Bedford*, ante.

† 7 Pick. 160.

applied to many councils. But there are some cases in which it is not correct; and it is therefore liable to be misunderstood.

It is true that a council has in no case any judicial power, in the sense of giving to its decision the character of a judgment, that can be enforced. This principle is clearly stated by Chief Justice Parsons, in the case of *Burr v. Sandwich*, before cited.* "Our ancestors came into this country smarting from the rod of the hierarchy, then in power in the country from which they emigrated. They were hostile to any coercive ecclesiastical jurisdiction, in all matters of doctrine and discipline, as repugnant to the liberties of the churches. And although synods were holden, and councils of the churches were convened, yet no compulsory authority was vested in them."

It is also true that, when a council advises anything to be done, by either or both of the parties, such advice never has the force of an award of arbitrators. Unless it is afterwards ratified and adopted by the parties, neither can maintain any suit upon it, at law, or in equity.† But though a church may, in most cases, disregard the advice of a council, because it has no "coercive jurisdiction," yet it does not follow that the decision has not some force, by which the parties will be affected. For when the matter submitted is a public one, in which the other churches have an interest, like the settlement of a pastor, if the church disregards the result of the council, it thereby cuts itself off from any right of fellowship, and assumes the position of Independency.

It will therefore be found that the decisions of councils, when duly made, are of three general classes, in respect to the force to be given to them, and the obligation of the parties to abide by them.

1. The first class embraces those cases in which the result is purely advisory, and nothing more. Thus, though a church has exclusive control of all its internal affairs, yet in any case of discipline or dissension, the parties may, as was said by Increase Mather, "for the sake of light and peace," ask the ad-

* 9 Mass 295.

† *Stearns v. Bedford ante.*

vice of the neighboring churches. It is their duty in such case to receive and consider the advice in a Christian spirit; but after all, it is the right and duty of the church, after obtaining all the light to be had, to act according to its own convictions. And if, in so doing, it acts contrary to the advice of the council, its standing in the denomination, and its right to fellowship, are not impaired. For in all these private matters, each local church is entirely independent of the other churches, and must ultimately act and decide for itself.

2. The second class is composed of those cases which concern the fraternity of the churches, being of a public nature. In these, though a council has no "compulsory power," like a judicial tribunal, it has jurisdiction coëxtensive with the denominational fellowship. In this respect, its decision is to be regarded as conclusive, unless subsequently reversed or modified by the action of another council. For the right of the associated churches to control their own fellowship, and to decide for themselves, in every case, in regard to the reasons for giving or withholding it, results from the plainest principles of Congregational freedom. To deny it, is to enslave the many to the few. To uphold it impairs the liberty of no one. It rests upon one of the simplest, as well as one of the most important, of human rights; the right of every man to choose his own associates; the right of every voluntary society to determine who may be its members; the right of every association to determine who shall share its privileges.

Of this class is a council called for the organization of a new church. If its advice is against the organization, the persons calling it are bound by it. They may, indeed, still organize themselves into a church, but it will be Independent. It is only when approved by a council, that a new church can be considered one of the brotherhood of churches, having a right to denominational recognition and fellowship.

So also a council called to ordain or install a minister, or pastor, is one of this class. If such a council refuses to ordain or install the candidate, the church that has called him is bound by the decision. True, it may, notwithstanding his rejection by the council, proceed itself to ordain or install him. But, in doing this, it proceeds as an Independent church. His rejec-

tion by a council is an exclusion from church fellowship; and the ministers and churches should so regard it, by declining to exchange with him, or to admit him to their pulpits. The action of the church, if it should ordain or install him, or employ him as a stated supply, would be in direct violation of the principles upon which the churches are associated together; and would result in its exclusion, also, from the denomination.

In all cases of this second class, another council may be called, if it is desired. But as all councils should be called from the neighboring churches, to a large extent, if not exclusively, the submission of the same matter to a second council would generally be followed by the same result.

3. The third class includes all cases in which charges of misconduct, neglect of duty, or a material change of doctrinal belief, are made against a minister, as a reason for his dismissal. It also embraces cases for the dismissal of a pastor, for reasons or upon conditions specified in the terms of his settlement, when any such terms or conditions were agreed upon by the parties at the time. In all such cases, if the council is duly constituted, and proceeds impartially, its decision is conclusive, and is legally, as well as morally, binding upon the parties. A second council can not revise it; "for a minister ought to have some termination of his parochial disputes; and when a question has been settled by the proper tribunal, after a fair hearing and discussion, it should be at rest."* Nor will a court of law, in any civil suit between the parties, try the question over again.† If the minister is convicted, the parish may dismiss him, and he can not impeach the correctness of the decision in a suit for his salary. If he is acquitted, the result is equally conclusive against the parish.‡

We have thus endeavored to state the general principles of Congregationalism, as recognized by the present usages of the churches, and by courts of law. In the origin and history of these principles, we may trace their design and tendency to promote the union and fellowship of the churches, and to secure their highest freedom. Despotism is not more opposed to such freedom, than are anarchy and disorder. A people are free,

* *Burr v. Sandwich*, ante.

† *Dutch church v. Bradford*, 8 Cow. (N. Y.) 457.

‡ *Hollis St. Meeting-house v. Pierpont*, 7 Met. (Mass.) 495.

not in being without law, but in having good laws, which they hold sacred and inviolable. And if, as in this country, and among the Congregational churches, we make our own laws, we ought to hold them all the more sacred. If they were imposed upon us by external arbitrary power, we might have some reason for evading or disregarding them; but as it is, we have no excuse. It is for this reason that we have so often adverted to the necessity of adhering to the laws and usages of the churches. In this way, alone, can unity of faith, and worship, and effort be secured. And if these pages may be instrumental, in any degree, in contributing to this result, we shall feel that we are amply repaid.

ARTICLE II.

THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST.

BY THE REV. HORATIO N. BURTON, NEWBURY, VT.

A Sermon preached at Plymouth church April 3, 1864. By
REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER.

"Verily, I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit."—*Mark* iii. 28—30.

IN order to any just estimate of this sermon, we need a clear statement of the nature of this sin as plainly made known to us in the word of God.

I. And first, according to the Bible, this sin is of a particular and specific character, distinguished by its very nature and form from all other sins. From all the possible forms of sin our Saviour singles out this alone and sets a special mark upon it. "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." This language certainly discriminates. It shows us that the sin against the Holy Ghost is a specific sin, differing in certain essential particulars from all other sins, and consequently in no way to be confounded or put into the same category with them.

II. A second characteristic of this sin is that it is specifically against the Holy Ghost, not simply against the Godhead, but against the Third Person in the Trinity. Blasphemy and indeed all sin against the Father and against the Son, can be forgiven, but not this against the Spirit. By reason of the object against which it is aimed, it is unpardonable. But as all sins are against the Triune God and so may be said to be against the Holy Ghost, our Lord marks out this sin by a third unmistakable characteristic.

III. It is a sin of blasphemy, a sin of the tongue, of word rather than of deed. "Whosoever *speaketh* against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him." Or as Mark has it: "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation; because they *said*, 'He hath an unclean spirit.'" It was what they said that at once furnished an occasion for our Saviour's warning and constituted the sin against which he warned them. It was blasphemous language, an open and verbal attributing of the work and power of the Holy Spirit to Satanic agency. Hence:

IV. It is a public, not a secret sin. Blasphemy from its very nature can not be secret. Dr. Emmons has well said on this point: "When the Scribes and Pharisees committed this sin, they spoke against the Holy Ghost before a multitude of people, with a malicious design of sinking his character and miraculous operations in the view of the world. And no man at this day, can be guilty of the unpardonable sin without blaspheming the Holy Ghost in public, or speaking against his peculiar operations in the hearing of others."

It is this reviling the Spirit in public that distinguishes the unpardonable sin from other sins against the Spirit. Men may resist, provoke, grieve and quench the Spirit, and yet not be guilty of the unpardonable sin. The one element in which all these forms of sin against the Spirit come short of the unpardonable sin, is an open, malicious, verbal ascription of the operations of the Holy Ghost to Satanic or other infernal agency. This would imply a depravity from which there is no possible recovery, a guilt not expiated even by the blood of Jesus Christ.

V. A final characteristic, therefore, of this sin is that it is unpardonable. He who commits it stands without the pale of the divine forgiveness. No change of time, place or circumstance can bring him within the sphere of God's mercy. "He hath never forgiveness, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

Having these plain and undeniable data of the Scriptures before us, as our criterion of judgment, we pass to a statement of the views advocated in the sermon under consideration.

And at the outset Mr. Beecher informs us that this sin against the Holy Ghost is not a specific sin, but a generic state or condition of the soul. This is his language :

"It is not an action ; it is a condition of disposition or heart from which certain kinds of action are developed. It is generic ; and like all generic states, it may to-day manifest itself in one way and to-morrow in another way. . . . It is not an acute disease ; it is a chronic state. . . . It is the sin of condition, of the whole moral condition, and not the sin of a specific act. . . . At first sight the language of the text seems to indicate that there is such a thing as a single sin, a single act that is so criminal, so heinous, that God will never forgive it. It is certainly true that the command reads as if the unpardonable sin consisted in a single and specific act. This has been the general opinion, and it is yet the popular impression ; . . . teachers and commentators have united in teaching that there was some specific action of wickedness which might properly be called the unpardonable sin."

Thus much in the way of mere assertion, our reverend sermonizer gives us in his introduction. He makes no attempt to draw his doctrine from his text by expounding its simple language, but admits that this is obviously against him, as is the almost universal exposition of it by teachers and commentators.

Let us pass, then, to the main body of the sermon. And here he entertains us with sundry rectorial flourishes respecting the fearful depths of depravity to which men may reduce themselves and to which the Scribes and Pharisees had actually reduced themselves, stigmatizing them, beyond what they deserve perhaps, as the progressives and radicals of their day, though in this he flatly contradicts his own language a few months ago when he said they, with Herod and the devil, were the conservatives of their day. This state of intensified de-

pravity and rocky insensibility it is that he again affirms, without any proof, to be the unpardonable sin. "We see," he remarks, "and recognize in common life that state of mind which Christ denounced in the Pharisees as unpardonable. There are men that everybody gives up. There are men whose families even regard them as incurables." The only scriptural proof he addresses to show that the unpardonable sin is an incurable moral state, is Paul's description of the condition of the Gentile world as recorded in Rom. chap. 1st and Eph. chap. 4th — but with great impropriety as we shall yet see.

We now have his theory and all the proof of it he adduces, clearly before us ; upon which we remark :

First, that it directly contradicts the distinguishing characteristics of the unpardonable sin as plainly given us in the Scriptures.

These make it an act of sin, a specific kind of sin, separate and distinct from all other sins. He says it is not an act at all, but a state ; not specific, but generic ; not a single sin, but a result of all other sins.

The Scriptures say it is a sin aimed specially at the Holy Ghost, and from this fact alone has peculiar guilt attaching to it. But with any construction you may put upon Mr. Beecher's theory, this sin is no more against the Holy Ghost than it is against the Father or the Son. It is a result of all sin, a state or condition of the soul ; but how can such a result, state, or condition, induced by all sins, be any more against one person of the Trinity than another? This he does not deign to tell us. Indeed he argues that the unpardonable sin is not specifically against the Holy Ghost. Hear him : " If it be said that this unpardonable sin is sufficiently defined as being blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, we ask, ' What is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost ? ' Is that a specific, or is it the carriage of a man's life and disposition? In point of fact, anything that is supposed to constitute blasphemy against the Holy Ghost has apparently been committed and recovered from by men." Accordingly he never speaks of the unpardonable sin as against the Holy Ghost, but rather as against conscience, our manhood, our sensibilities, and the like.

Again, the unpardonable sin, according to the Bible, is a sin

of the tongue; it is speaking against the Holy Ghost, blaspheming the Spirit. Now speaking, blaspheming is undeniably an act of man, not a condition or state of his soul. Undeniably, therefore, our sermonizer is wide of the truth. Doubtless what a man speaks springs out of a state of his heart. But our Saviour nowhere says that this immanent state of the heart is unpardonable, but the overt act which proceeds from it.

Hence again, while the word of God represents this sin as open, avowed and public, Mr. Beecher represents it as personal and private. According to the Bible it is an act of speech addressed to the public ear; according to Mr. Beecher it is a state of the heart concealed in the individual's own breast.

Again, Christ says it is an unpardonable sin; Mr. Beecher, that it is an incurable state. The former says it shall never be forgiven, neither in this world, neither in the world to come; the latter, that it is "a state in which a man's conscience becomes so dead that there is no resurrection from it in this life." Would he by this limiting adjunct keep the way open for forgiveness in some future age? It is the convenient escape of a certain class of errorists. And if you tell them the Saviour says "neither in the world to come," they reply that this means the age to come, implying that in some after age there will be forgiveness even for this sin.

Our second general criticism of Mr. Beecher's theory is that it ignores certain essential distinctions everywhere recognized in the word of God. Here as elsewhere in his theological utterances, he utterly confounds guilt or criminality with depravity, and punishment with chastisement. Sin is never with him a crime against God to be expiated, but a disease of man's soul to be cured. It is a thing not so much to be punished as corrected. It is an infirmity or weakness, not so properly subject to the arbitraments of justice as to the dictates of compassion, a sort of negative condition out of which man needs to be brought by discipline and culture, and not a positive offence against God. And in keeping with this view of sin, is his view of the atonement. It is only a grand catholicon, a universal panacea, simply an expedient, or display to educate and impress men rather than a satisfaction to divine justice to expiate their guilt.

Regeneration is reform, education, moral medication, and not a new birth by the power of the Holy Ghost. Pardon is cure rather than remission, the healing of a distempered moral nature rather than the obliteration of guilt. Mr. Beecher's theology is very consistent with itself, but is as far from orthodoxy as error is from truth.

This utter confusion of ideas, or rather, this heretical substitution of one set of ideas in place of another, runs through the whole discourse we are considering. The sin against the Holy Ghost is not guilt before God, but simply an incapacity, "a cessation of sensibility," "a want of spiritual pulse," as he styles it. It is not a positive crime, but a negative state. Its injurious and offensive aspect is wholly manward, not Godward. It is a hard nature, a benumbed conscience, rather than an offence against God and a consequent exposedness to the inflictions of divine justice. It is unpardonable only in the sense of incurable. And this he proves in his usual way by bare assertion: "So far from its being an unreasonable thing to speak of unpardonable sins in the sense of an incurable moral condition, it is eminently reasonable."

And as to recovery out of a depraved moral condition, it is all of man. Sinners are no where pointed by him to the aids of the Holy Spirit. Alluding to those who have committed the unpardonable sin, near the close of the sermon, he exclaims, "How sad is the thought of a man's yielding up his manhood! . . . if fomentations or any medicament would do any good, we would not withhold it; but they are dead. And so we let them be, and they go to the dead house." Here we leave it. It is all man and no God. The sin against the Holy Ghost is yielding up one's manhood. The guilt of it is the injury done to one's self, not to the Spirit. The preventive of it is self-will, not the aids of grace. Recovery out of a state verging towards it is by reformation, not regeneration.

The theory of our erratic preacher utterly fails also to distinguish between the unpardonable sin and other sins against the Holy Ghost. It levels all distinctions; it blots out all discriminations among sins so distinctly made in the Scriptures. We may resist, provoke, grieve and quench the Spirit; but are all these unpardonable? For aught that his theory discloses, they

may be. But the word of God clearly distinguishes these sins from that of blasphemy against the Spirit.

But finally, we briefly remark upon the wild exegesis of our friend to support his speculations. We have already alluded to his reference to Paul's description of the Gentile world as given in the 1st chapter of Romans and the 4th chapter of Ephesians. After quoting those passages he adds: "Here is a description of persons who have committed the unpardonable sin." Is it possible that this is a true interpretation? If it is, then the whole heathen world are guilty of the unpardonable sin, and all our toils and prayers to evangelize the heathen are a contest against God and an inexorable doom! How a man not wholly infatuated could so interpret Scripture, it is impossible for us to conceive. It is contrary to all interpretation ever before conceived of those passages. It is in direct contradiction to Paul's own interpretation and to the whole drift of his great argument. He adduces these facts of human sinfulness with the special intent of showing that all men need redemption, and that this redemption from just such sins is in Christ Jesus.

Nor is his exegesis of these passages wider of the truth than is that of his text. He admits that it obviously teaches that the sin against the Holy Ghost is a specific act of sin, but at once assures us that it can not mean so. He reminds one of the eccentric Sterne, who once announced as his text: "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting," and opened upon it with these words: "That I deny." That Mr. Beecher should perpetually contradict himself is of but little consequence. We have got used to that. But we feel impelled to remonstrate when he flatly denies Christ's own words, and gives us for pure doctrine the wild fancies of his own distempered brain.

ARTICLE III.

MENDELSSOHN'S LETTERS AND LIFE.

BY THE REV. J. T. TUCKER, HOLLISTON, MASS.

1. *Letters of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy from 1833 to 1847.* First and Second Series; Translated from the German by Lady WALLACE. Philadelphia: Frederick Leypoldt. 1865.
2. *Life of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy from the German of W. A. Lampadius.* With Supplementary Sketches by Julius Benedict, Henry F. Chorley, Ludwig Rellstab, Bayard Taylor, R. S. Willis, and J. S. Dwight. Edited and Translated by WILLIAM LEONHARD GAGE. New York and Philadelphia: Frederick Leypoldt. 1865.

A BRIEF notice of the Letters of this eminent musical composer and director, some months ago, warmly but inadequately expressed our sense of their beauty and value. Drawn back to them again by the lingering flavor of their first enjoyment, the re-perusal of them impresses us still more deeply with the rare excellence of these epistolary effusions, and of the heart which inspired them. The pleasure which they have given us leads us to bestow a few more pages upon them, in the wish to put such of our readers as have not seen them, in possession of some of the wealth of genius, taste and human nobleness which they contain. And yet, one shrinks involuntarily from the attempt to portray such a life on any scale, with much the same feeling of the impossible as if setting forth to describe the peculiar charms of a water-lily, or a circlet of opals.

Meanwhile, the biography by his friend Lampadius, and the editorial *addenda* of the American translation, come to our aid, filling out the picture in circumstantial details, rather than adding very much to our knowledge of the man. Indeed, without the series of correspondence already in our hands, we should hardly feel acquainted with the subject of these writings: for the more recent publication, among us, is too sketchy to give a clear conception of Mendelssohn's true nature. Its general estimate of his character and professional accomplishments is well made up — the description especially of his inimitable style

of conducting the oratorio, which the biographer gives us in chapter sixteen. Some of the appended notices are good. But we should not value the book very highly except as a supplement to the Letters, to which accordingly we shall mostly confine ourselves.

Mendelssohn was of Jewish descent through a distinguished ancestry of that race on the paternal side; and as we have wandered through these volumes, so full of the personal qualities and characteristics of their author, the thought has flashed upon us again and again, that in physical elasticity, natural impulses, and in his innate and glorious love of song, this young Hebrew was a close copy of the noble shepherd-boy of Bethlehem, afterwards the sweet psalmist and heroic king of Israel. Artists said that they had never seen a more perfectly developed figure or a more masculine beauty. Athletic as a Greek gymnast, he was an expert in swimming and in the saddle, and his pedestrianism was equal to a foot-tramp over the roughest paths, and up the highest mountains of Switzerland. Then his buoyancy had the perpetual gush of a strong fountain. His nature was all aglow with artistic and imaginative fervor. At eighteen, he was through his University course at Berlin, with the honors of an excellent classic and general education; and already he had delighted the musical public with his overture to the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which he interprets, in a bewildering maze of harmony, the sparkling, ethereal romance of the great master of English drama. This certainly was a most precocious and promising springtime of life. And to his other endowments was added, as the biographical sketch preliminary to the letters tells us, "a talent for improvisation and a memory so wonderful, that not only could he play almost all Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven by heart, but he could also without hesitation accompany a whole opera from memory, provided he had but seen the score once."

Mendelssohn's father was a wealthy banker at Hamburg, in which city Felix was born, February, 1809. His grandfather was the philosopher, Moses Mendelssohn, whose writings in metaphysics and divinity fill seven volumes, and of whom the *New American Cyclopaedia* says, that "no other German author has given to philosophical thought so simple and noble an expres-

sion in the form of epistles and dialogues." This ancestor was a sturdy adherent of Judaism to the end. But the father swerved into Lutheranism, of which church his mother was a member. This admirable lady, gifted richly in intellect and in heart, was of the distinguished family of Bartholdy, a Jewish lineage also, but Protestant by adoption: whence the additional patronymic of the musician. Wealth and scholarly and social distinction thus combined to favor the advent and progress of the new scion of this house. If he inherited genius, he furnishes another example of not transmitting further the brilliant but evanescent honor.

His life was not eventful save in its professional triumphs. A prodigy in concert playing before he was a dozen years old, he gave himself to musical composition as his vocation, with a passionate yet most calm and determined devotion, and speedily won a popularity on the continent and in Great Britain which has no parallel to this day, for the splendor of its admiring homage. The readers of Charles Auchester can find, in its enthusiastic pages, with what a blaze of light Mendelssohn's personal as well as artistic accomplishments glorified him to English eyes. And it was a reputation which stood on a solid base. There was nothing of the claptrap music-master in him. No one could labor more conscientiously at a work of genuine inspiration than he. He did not dash off his conceptions and leave them there, because an applauding public was satisfied with their effect. His two great oratorios of Saint Paul and Elijah were each from seven to nine years in preparation; and when they had been brought out with an ovation of national praise unsurpassed in the annals of sacred song, the author's first thought was to work into them immediately the improvements which his own keen criticism had pronounced necessary, with the calmness of an uninterested amateur, amid the thunders of applause which greeted their performance. We hardly can recall another equal example of independent self-judgment and resolute endeavor after absolute perfection. Possibly this very *time labor et mora* may have made his musical works less generally popular; there may be an excess of critical nicety for the most universal appreciation of art. Mendelssohn wrote rather for proficient in his favorite studies, than for the ordinary concert

room. His scores, as we are told, are considered among the most difficult by the profession, a crucial test which but few of our conductors would very likely care to undergo. Yet the splendid success of his compositions at the recent Musical Festival of the Handel and Haydn Society showed that when worthily performed, they are second to none in effective power. There is a rare beauty in this ceaseless striving for a faultless expression of one's thought, and an equal value in the lesson thus furnished to all who would live through their life-work when life-work here is over. This is the way in which he writes to a musical friend, after the Elijah had brought all England to his feet, and won the personal most flattering congratulations of the Queen and Prince Albert :

"For the last few days, however, I have again begun to work with all my might at my 'Elijah,' and hope to amend the greatest part of what I thought deficient in the first performance. I have quite completed one of the most difficult parts (the widow), and you will certainly be pleased with the alterations—I may well say with the improvements. 'Elijah' is become far more impressive and mysterious in this part, the want of which was what annoyed me. Unluckily I never find out this kind of thing till *post festum*, and till I have improved it. I hope, too, to hit on the true sense of other passages that we have discussed together, and shall seriously revise all that I did not deem satisfactory ; so that I hope to see the whole completely finished within a few weeks, and then be able to begin something new."

For once, at least, the world has seen a full-winged Pegasus who did not refuse also to draw in harness. While we are thus looking into the substructure of Mendelssohn's brilliant fame, we will develop a little more fully his thoroughly truthful spirit as an artist : his own words are better than any we can substitute.

"Every day, I am more sincerely anxious to write exactly as I feel, and to have even less regard than ever to external views ; and when I have composed a piece just as it sprang from my heart, then I have done my duty toward it ; and whether it brings hereafter fame, honor, decorations or snuff-boxes, etc., is a matter of indifference to me."

There was no affectation in this language of the young man of twenty-two, nor did he ever decline from this erectness of

sentiment and principle, not even when subsequently he was obliged to refuse the most urgent wishes, which became almost imperative commands, of the king from whom he had received distinguished honors, to execute some musical commissions which he could not undertake with a clear professional (not moral) conscience. He was the soul of honor to his own art which he magnified, and defended, and worked for with the chivalric enthusiasm of a knight-errant and a devotee combined. Writing afterward to a friend of the legal faculty at Leipzig, he can see an inspiration to high endeavor in that prosaic science, as well as in his own :

“Where is it that you find beauty when I am working at a quartett or a symphony? Merely in that portion of myself that I transfer to it, or can succeed in expressing: and you can do this in as full a measure as any man, in your defence of a culprit, or in a case of libel, or in any one thing that entirely engrosses you, and that is the great point. If you can only give utterance to your most inmost thoughts, and if these inmost thoughts become more and more worthy of being expressed, . . . all the rest is indifferent.”

To this he returns again and again, in his irrepressible zeal to transfer his own intensely spiritual conception of his calling into the souls of his brother composers; now condemning as utterly repugnant to his nature that “cold, soulless coquetry in music which is in itself most unmusical, and yet so often adopted as the basis of singing and playing and music of all kinds;” and anon throwing off in the rapidity of epistolary talk such profoundly philosophical thought as the following, equally adapted to every serious department of human effort. When it is remembered that this was the self-imposed rule of life of the heir of immense wealth, and the idolized object of social and fashionable adulation, the example becomes uniquely impressive.

“The question is then solely what is felt and experienced within a man’s own breast, and uttered from the depths of his heart, be it grave or gay, bitter or sweet — character and life are displayed here; and in order to prevent existence being dissipated and wasted when brilliant and happy, or depressed and destroyed when the reverse, there is but one safeguard — to work and to go on working. So, for your sake, I have only *one* wish, that you may bring to light

what exists within you, in your nature and feelings, which none save yourself can know or possess. In your works go deeper into your inmost being, and let them bear a distinct stamp; let criticism and intellect rule as much as you please in all outward questions and forms, but in all inner and original thought, the heart alone and genuine feeling. So work daily, hourly and unremittingly — there you never can attain entire mastery or perfection; no man ever yet did, and therefore it is the highest vocation of life."

An honest, sturdy individualism, which is a very different thing from a conceited self-reliance, is an indispensable element of decided success. To know one's self, and to be true to that knowledge, is worth more than any array of flattering retainers, in the battle of life. So it is not *where* but *how* one fulfils his task, which is most important. We wish that uneasy souls, who spend half their vital energy in complaining that they have no suitable field in which to do themselves justice, would fully take in the nobleness of this advice concerning the removal of a friend to London, under the idea that he could exert a greater power at that centre, for high musical art, than in a less conspicuous place; it might make them more contented and useful where they are. If a man cannot create a centre of influence for himself, he will not accomplish much in one created for him.

"The reformation and improvement of individual cities, even were they as important as London, is in fact either impossible or indifferent; but if a man only strives thoroughly to perfect his own being, and to purify himself by degrees from all dross, in acting thus he is working for all cities alike; and if he does so even in a village, his labors are certain to make their way into the world, and there to exercise their due influence."

These solid stepping-stones are scattered freely along the stream of these clear, rippling, sportive waters; not interrupting the current of easy, joyous epistolary conversation, never reminding you of a causeway thrown up to walk upon, for they are invariably the suggestion of some natural and unsought occasion. These volumes are, in fact, a delightful miscellany of every kind of topic which would spontaneously turn up in the confidential intercourse of friends. Mendelssohn's domestic relationships were thoroughly congenial with his disposition. His filial deference and reverence take you back to the tents of

Mamre. An older sister, Fanny, was the repository of his innermost thoughts. She was herself a feminine counterpart of her gifted brother in musical genius, and their studies in this art went on together, however separate in place, to the end. Other brothers made up the family group, between all the members of which the entirest harmony reigned. Beyond these, a numerous acquaintance with the *élite* of Continental scholars and artists imparts to this correspondence a charming zest. The first series, from 1830 to 1832, is mostly occupied with a leisurely tour through Hungary, Italy and Switzerland. His long stay at Rome afforded the young musician the best of opportunities to study and criticize Italian music and art. His letters from that city, as well as from Florence and Naples, are full of these themes, not handled in the ordinary descriptive style of cursory travellers, but wrought over in his own mind and affections with tenderest sympathy, yet with a keen perception of merit and its want. The second series contains his history of musical composing and directing from 1833 to his sudden death, at the scarcely meridian age of thirty-eight, in 1847.

There is a rare pleasure in the mere look of these volumes. You are continually coming upon traces of their author's fine taste and varied talent, the versatility and bounding spring of his spirit, in the snatches of song which he sprinkles along his pages, showering them among his correspondents like handfuls of pearls: or, while you are keeping his company along his Alpine rambles, you turn the leaf, and his ready pencil has drawn you the picturesque sketch of the mountains over which he last scrambled, or the rude inn or chalet where he was held in durance through some sudden storm and flood. His love of nature in every varying mood is fresh and genuine. His own good nature is imperturbable. He had that chief excellence of a tourist, to make friends with every thing and person that might fall in his way. Wading up to his knees in the freshet of a soaking rain of three days' duration, which caught him at Interlaken, was not too much for his philosophy; nor yet to find himself established, for the season, at Düsseldorf, in lodgings with only a thin partition between his rooms and a neighbor "who has placed her piano against the wall just on the other

side of mine, and to my sorrow practices two hours a day, making every day the same mistakes, and playing all Rossini's airs in such a desperately slow, phlegmatic *tempo*, that I certainly must have played her some malicious trick, had it not occurred to me that she was probably at all hours more tormented by my piano than I by hers." No wonder he could tell his friend, the pastor Schubring, "no one can say there is one single person with whom I am not on friendly terms, if they will at all permit me to be so." This pastor Schubring, himself a musician, was Mendelssohn's main dependence in collecting and arranging suitable Scripture texts for his oratorios. When he wants more words, he implores his clerical ally to get down his Concordance and ransack the Bible for more of its grand and thrilling passages. Sometimes the vein runs into the amusing, but not designedly irreverent, as — "May Elisha sing soprano? or is this inadmissible, as in the same chapter he is described as a 'bald head'?" This was only the merry-hearted glee which never let a family birthday pass without a tribute of music and epistolary love to the dear one commemorated; which, amidst tears of sympathy when bereavements began to thin their circle, must have its play even with a grown up brother upon some old remembered custom — "Had you a cake decorated with lights? . . . Did you drink chocolate? were my sisters with you, or you with them, at dinner or supper? did you think of us? May God bless you, my dear brother, on that day, and on every day of your life." This man's heart never outgrew its childhood. His life was so bound up in his friends, that the sudden death of his beloved Fanny is supposed to have fatally precipitated the tendency to cerebral disease, which almost as suddenly terminated his own career. A happy marriage of his own seemed only to complete and rivet the closer the circlet of these home attachments.

We miss all traces of the professional depreciation which has unhappily come to be considered almost inseparable from art-rivalries. If our author is moved to unfavorable judgment of others, it is manifestly in the cause of truth and with a fair charity. He is caustic on the French school of music for its pandering to the merely sensuous tastes and passions of a frivolous people; he shows up the flashy Donizetti for his laziness

and cupidity; and justly enough in either case. But how lovingly he praises and re-edits Handel, Beethoven and Bach; how chivalrously he defends Mozart. And among his contemporaries, he takes such men as Cherubini, Moscheles, Rossini, Chopin, Liszt to his bosom, as honored teachers or familiar friends. He was as kind to young composers, as Southey was to young authors, encouraging, advising, bringing out to public attention their productions, with a fatherly rather than fraternal care. His relations with his publishers were so thoroughly frank and honorable, that more than once they gave the works of unknown beginners to the world on his sole recommendation. He seemed almost to wish that he might discover a higher genius in some one than his own. If he had, we do not believe it would have excited his envy. But there is nothing more charming in these volumes than the intercession he set on foot with Murray, the London publisher, to secure the favorable mention, in his Handbook for Switzerland, of a worthy guide in depressed circumstances, who had proved his fidelity to our traveller, among the Alps.

Were we reviewing a mere biography in these laudatory terms, the reader might fairly conclude that either the biographer or the reviewer had looked only on the bright side of a very faultless character. But a man's private correspondence is the truest possible photograph of his nature and life: it is that life. And we do not discover in these letters any serious drawback on the impressions thus given of their author. Published at a later date, in Germany, than the *Life* by Lampadius, they really compel no deduction from the laudatory verdicts rendered by that personal admirer and professional follower. He had, to a remarkable degree, the power and the charm of self-forgetfulness. We wish we could give the letter to his brother Paul, written at Birmingham, describing the magnificent reception and effect of his *Elijah*, in which he seems to think of himself least of everybody, and relates the triumphs of the evening as if he had been only an admiring spectator. We can not detect the slightest flush of vanity. Indeed, there is, now and then, a shadow of melancholy reminiscence falling across the page, when he is telling some bosom friend of these grand ovations of applause which had become with him a part

of his life. It is almost as though he hardly felt that his work was of enough utility to the public to justify so much attention.

"So few traces remain of performances and musical festivals, and all that is personal; the people indeed shout and applaud, but that quickly passes away without leaving a vestige behind, and yet it absorbs as much of one's life and strength as *better* things, or perhaps even more; and the evil of this is, that it is impracticable to come half out, when you are once in; you must either go on the whole way, or not at all. I dare not even attempt to withdraw, or the cause which I have undertaken will suffer, and yet I would gladly see that it was not merely *my* cause, but considered a good and universal one." . . . "I felt just the same in Birmingham; I never made such a decided effect with my music as there, and never saw the public so much or so exclusively occupied with myself individually, and yet there is even in this something — what shall I call it? fleeting and evanescent, which I find irksome and depressing rather than cheering."

Is this the half-suppressed strain of the minor-keyed "variety and vexation" which breathes out from so many dissatisfied souls, when the envied "observed of all observers"? It at least gives added proof of the high views of social obligation which wrought in this soul, of its sense of duty to benefit more than to entertain the world. Some questions start up along this record of an illustrious life which we can not altogether ignore; upon which we are not able, or do not wish, to give judgment. Some of Mendelssohn's more religious friends argued with him the point of his management of the music at the Royal Theatre. Mendelssohn's vindication of his doing this was taken on the high grounds of the importance of reforming and making not only safe but beneficial these entertainments. Concerning which we can only say, that as an American question, this experiment would, in our opinion, be wholly futile. Its German possibilities are beyond our knowledge. But that Mendelssohn believed in them, and acted with utmost conscientiousness in this behalf, does not admit of a doubt. And was this manliest of men a Christian? Certainly, as the church in which he was born and nurtured would answer that supreme inquiry. These letters are not demonstrative on this subject. The biographer, however, is very outspoken and emphatic concerning it. The letters are full of transparent sincerity and

tenderest sympathies, with a deep reverence for all sacred things—the Bible, the church, the God and the Saviour of men. But Mendelssohn did not sympathize with what he calls a pietistic religion. His intensely active spirit could accept no phase of piety which depreciates human enterprise and zeal in all worthy employments; whose adherents, "instead of striving in their vocation to press on toward perfection, talk of a heavenly calling being incompatible with an earthly one, and are incapable of loving with their whole hearts any human being, or anything on earth." What precisely he points at by this, we do not know nor care to, if it be a portrait and not a caricature. It is the only instance that we remember in these volumes of anything which has a tang of bitterness in it. We can not intelligently estimate its bearing on the personal religious feelings of the writer, of whom we should be sorry to believe that he was not in cordial fellowship with the true kingdom of God. If anything can be concluded, from a man's artistic creations, to his character, we should say that Mendelssohn's whole nature was profoundly infused with the devotional spirit of prayer as well as praise. His biographer develops this feature of his illustrious subject's works with much impressiveness. That he was full of natural charity, purity and benevolence—forgiveness of enemies he seems to have had no use for—no one will question.

The abrupt termination of this gifted man's life filled Europe with profoundest sorrow. His cherished sister Fanny had fallen under a stroke of apoplexy while attending a rehearsal of one of her own compositions at Frankfort. Mendelssohn was overwhelmed with grief; but he still toiled on: and when his wife would check his diligence, he would answer: "The time is not far off when I shall rest; I must make the most of the time given me." Going one evening in October to the house of a friend, she sung to him a song, at his request, which he had only that night composed. "By a strange coincidence, this song began with these words: 'Vanished has the light of day.'" While she was singing it, its author was seized with vertigo, was carried senseless to his home, and after rallying and sinking a few times, died in November. All Germany

mourned at his funeral. The monarchs of Europe testified their condolence in letters to his widow. The people wept for him as for a brother.

ARTICLE IV.

"THE CHRISTIAN UNITY SOCIETY."

BY THE REV. A. J. GORDON, JAMAICA PLAIN, MASS.

AN association bearing the name of "The Christian Unity Society" has recently sent abroad quite largely its address, its constitution and its official lists. The purpose of the organization as avowed in its constitution is "to diffuse information concerning the common faith and to labor for a restoration of the visible union and communion of all believers." Deploping the fact that "Protestantism has no organization, that its countless divisions and internal dissensions are made the auxiliary of Romanism and infidelity, contributing to their growth and influence more than anything else," the Society proposes to seek to obviate these evils by laboring to bring about harmony among believers, or, to state the case more clearly than the address has done, to bring those Christians who belong to what are commonly denominated the sects into acquiescence and fellowship with her who claims to be the only truly apostolic church.

It will naturally be asked concerning so bold a proposition: What advantage does it offer from the church in whose name it speaks? What does it concede to those whom it addresses? What common ground does it propose to occupy with those who have been hitherto so widely separated from it?

Looking carefully through the address we find no very satisfactory answers to these questions. True, it does offer in behalf of the church the boon of "organic unity" which she professes alone to hold, allowing those who have departed from it to again partake of its blessings. It vaguely intimates that it would be willing to make the Nicene Creed the rallying point of a common faith. But taking it as a whole, we find nothing more or less in the address than the old oft repeated call for the wanderers to return to the mother church.

The spirit of the address is kind and conciliatory, as of course it could well afford to be. It denies in words that the unity sought requires "absolute absorption and conversion into identity" with the church—conformity and uniformity in all things; but clearly proves the same in its arguments. In words it pays an appreciative tribute to the zeal and efficiency and usefulness of various Christian denominations, but in argument declares their existence to be an evil. In words it seems to have an enthusiasm for the work proposed that is totally disinterested and magnanimous; in argument it proves that its zeal is for its own church and for the welfare of its own dearest cause. All this is natural enough. It does not offend. Only the whole subject suggests certain difficulties to our mind that the writer has failed to solve. These we propose at this time to consider.

The fundamental idea of the association, as we have already intimated, is this, that non-conformity in religion is the great evil of the church and that the highest success of the Gospel can be attained only in ecclesiastical uniformity. "The Society," says the address, "is the product of a deep and growing conviction that divisions existing among Christians are offensive to God and the greatest obstruction to the progress of the Gospel." p. 3. Is this assumption on which the whole argument proceeds correct? We believe not.

To advocate sectarianism for its own merits is of course an ungracious task and one which few would like to undertake. But we believe there are deeper evils in the church than this, and notwithstanding so high an authority as Arnold of Rugby has pronounced it "the worst and most mischievous idol by which the church has ever been plagued," we doubt if the assertion can be supported.

On the contrary we believe that there is much that is good and much that calls for profound gratitude in the present economy of an externally divided church. It undoubtedly gives free scope to her varied and otherwise conflicting activities; brings harmony out of her antagonisms, and economizes forces by separating them, which must else be wasted by their own friction. The confidence which each denomination feels in its own

superiority inspires it with a zeal in promulgating its own principles, and this zeal, while it is the vehicle of much that is sectarian and transient, at the same time under God carries abroad vastly more that is vital and permanent. So that while in subordinate things one says, "I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos," both can say in regard to the great essential and vital doctrines, "I am of Jesus Christ;" and while each wears the insignia of his special corps, all march under the same banner against a common foe.

How much, moreover, the church owes to the existence of sects for clearness and compactness in the statements of her doctrines; how many crude and unphilosophical symbols have been ground down and polished by the attrition of controversy; how much of error and misconception have been sifted out of the creeds by polemical winnowings and threshings; how repeatedly have the accretions of falsehood, which in the course of time gather about religious truth, been removed by the sharp antagonisms of sectarian strife; how many ideas, in fine the most vital and precious to the church, have, humanly speaking, been kept alive by the jealous circumspections of the denominations. The evils which result from monopoly of the Gospel, perversions of it in the interest of a single church, biased interpretations and one sided expositions have unquestionably been very largely prevented by the presence and watchfulness of differing religious orders.

We would not deny that in its nature division is an evil, and that its opposite principle of union ought to be constantly labored for and prayed for. But taking the world as it is and as it has been; summing up our indebtedness to church uniformity on the one hand and to church diversity on the other, we do not deplore its existence. And coming from the mouth of a churchman the words, "the enormous evils that spring from a divided Christianity," produce no special pain in our religious sensorium, and thrill us with no special desire to throw ourselves into "the motherly arms of the church."

On the contrary, when we think how much of blessing for the world and how much of benefit to the church universal the providence of God has educed from this very thing, we find in it one of the profoundest causes for gratitude. "Christianity,"

says Bunsen, "proves itself to be the religion of the world by its power of surviving the inherent crises of development through which it has had to pass." Yes and, we add, by its power of fully meeting those crises out of its own resources; of fitting itself into all the convolutions of history; of pushing itself out into the ever varying want and woe of humanity. And how has it been able to do this? By the diversity of its outward organizations; by its ability to assume manifold forms of operation and work successfully through them.

The rise of Methodism is an exact illustration of what we mean. It is perfectly clear that at that time the establishment had become so unwieldy, so hampered with civil and ecclesiastical rules that she was utterly unable to meet the prevailing demand for a free and missionary Gospel. If here and there a preacher was to be found who had a true evangelical zeal, his jurisdiction was so prescribed by the fences of the church that his zeal profited him nothing. When John Berridge undertook to carry salvation to the poor and the unprivileged about him, on the ground that his conscience impelled him to seek to preach the Gospel to every creature, he was summoned before the bishop with the rebuke, "as to your conscience you know that preaching out of your parish is contrary to the canons of the church."

But providence met the exigency. Out of the church, though against her will and in spite of her opposition, came forth that noble system of itinerancy which has carried salvation to thousands and tens of thousands, and has continued until this day as one of the most potent of agencies for reclaiming lost men.

But the churchman sees nothing in the origin of this Society to rejoice over. "All must feel," says our author, "how needless and how fearfully mixed with wrong on both sides was the Wesleyan separation." p. 9. Needless, forsooth! No power on earth can forever check a living stream in its course. From the very dams that have restrained it, it will every day gain strength for the inevitable rupture. So no device of priest or bishop can so choke the life of Christianity in the church as completely to shut it off from those who are panting for its blessings. It must break out somewhere, and if it becomes

irregular in its course the fault lies with those who attempted to repress it. It is not a wrong on both sides. If the flood can not flow in the arteries of the church because of the pressure of some human obstructions, then there must be an *anastomosis*. Vitality must be supplied to all the members of Christ's body.

There is an evil for which this address proposes no panacea, of which it makes no mention; that dull immobility, that stagnation of religious thought and of religious life which have been the invariable accompaniments of ecclesiastical uniformity. Against these, sectarianism has been in constant antagonism and resistance. And if it had performed no other office, this were enough to secure it from the imputation of being an unmitigated evil.

When the question comes between a dead uniformity and a living or even conflicting diversity of religious creeds, it would seem that there could be very little hesitancy in choosing. And yet we believe that the first of these conditions is the alternative offered us by this Society.

As though the illustration which Romanism has given of a Christianity completely paralyzed by the clamps and constraints of ritualism were not sufficient, it is now proposed to repeat the experiment; to take the faith of Christendom as it is held in solution by the various sects and crystallize it about the Thirty-nine articles or the Nicene Creed; to constrain its varied devotion into exact and rigidly defined channels; to put all its worship into regulation dress; to compress its free and plastic life into concerted formulas and modes; to sacrifice a variety which must inevitably grow out of a true unity to a unity that has no variety; and to call back all the "children of the dispersion" from their widely different yet spiritually accordant labors, and bid them all march to the music and measure of the "historic church." Theoretically the proposition is untenable enough, but practically it is even more so.

To ask Methodism, with its splendid record of fidelity to the claims of a missionary Gospel, with its noble history of self-sacrificing and evangelic labor, to come back and be absorbed again into the church from which it sprung, abandoning that organism which, however faulty it may be in some respects, has nevertheless penetrated a stratum of society that the cumber-

some machinery of the Anglican church never did and never could effectually reach; to ask Congregationalism after having stamped its polity upon our rising institutions and done more than anything else to mould and determine that noble republicanism which we now enjoy, to return into that church whose whole genius and history has been so manifestly on the side of monarchy, is to ask simply that Romulus and Remus, after having grown to manhood shall go back and be suckled on that creed which nourished them kindly enough in their infancy but which was never designed to feed them in maturer life.

And this suggests another grave objection to the theory of the address, viz., that it presupposes the possibility of a harmless return from spiritualism to ritualism, an idea to which the teaching of history seems most clearly opposed. That symbols have done much to develop ideas, that types have had a blessed mission in helping to bring forth spiritual conceptions and lead them through adolescence to maturity, is a fact too obvious to be denied. But to suppose that ideas that have once sloughed off their skins can be made to crawl back into them and still maintain a healthy life is quite another matter. It is to suppose that manhood can return to the swaddling bands of infancy, that the church can leave the more "stately mansions" into which by discipline and training, by reformations and revolutions, providence has brought her, and crouch down again into her "low vaulted past." This much seems certain. If Boston returns to Canterbury, American individualism must go back to Anglican multitudinism; American liberty of conscience to Anglican absolution. There is no possibility of blending the two classes of ideas, and the latter does not propose to yield to the former. And if anything in church history seems plain it is this, that movements in this direction have invariably compromised the purity of the church, bringing about a decline in her life corresponding to the regression in her external economy.

We believe we find this principle perfectly illustrated in the history of the Roman church.

When on the fall of the Western Empire that flood of barbarian races poured into Europe, threatening inundation to the church as they had done to the Empire, one idea became promi-

nent in the church, to convert these races to Christianity. And so she had recourse to the means which, humanly speaking, seemed most likely to accomplish the result, viz., a revival of Judaism, the establishment of the Papal hierarchy with its numberless ceremonies and external appliances.

Instead of preaching the Gospel to these people and trusting to its divine power to subdue their hearts, it was sought to dazzle their senses and to charm their imagination. Clovis and his savage Franks could not be moved by any simply spiritual religion, and so it was determined to fascinate them by pomp and display. Being induced to witness the worship, "the baptismal ceremony," says the historian, "was performed with the utmost pomp; the church was hung with embroidered tapestry and white curtains; odors of incense like the airs of paradise were diffused around; the buildings blazed with countless lights."* Such were the principal influences by which these races were wrought upon.

What was the result? The pagans were Christianized and the church was paganized; the fallow ground of barbarism was nominally broken up, but the yoke which had been taken upon the neck of the church rested there, and rests there still; a step had been taken backwards which could not be retraced, and overloaded with these human inventions and corrupted by this infusion of unregenerated life she has been staggering onward until now.

It will not be easy therefore, we think, with the apostolic precept "Be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" before us, and with the historic examples of what a disregard of that precept has produced so clearly manifest, to persuade American Christians to abandon the spiritual form of religion as maintained in the different sects, for one that is absolutely ritualistic on the plea of Christian union.

Undoubtedly the advocates of this reform would deny the applicability of this illustration to the case in question, but we believe that a perfectly candid examination of the subject will justify the parallelism and that whether we consider their doctrine or their practice, the similarity between the position of the two churches is most striking.

* Milman's *Latin Christianity*, v. 1., p. 381.

What are the methods by which a large portion of the proselytes to Episcopacy are at present gained, but a repetition on a smaller scale and in a more quiet way of the Roman expedient for converting the barbarians? We believe that in their essential features the two plans are identical.

And if it is courteous for the author of the discourse entitled "Massachusetts a field for Church missions," to speak of "the grim mask which has been forced upon the religion of our land" by the denominations, it is just as courteous for us to speak of the rouge and cosmetics by which some have disguised the meek, spiritual features of the Bride of Christ that she might the more successfully woo and win lovers, but which have made her a stranger to many of her own children. We can admit all that that distinguished writer says, of the influence which the Episcopal church acquires over the multitude by these accessories. The splendor of her "devotional uniform," the odor of mediæval sanctity that exhales from her worship, the subdued and chastened tone of her preaching so alluring to unbelieving ears, the uplifting power of her majestic chants and stately recitations, the delightful gradation in her way of conversion so happily in contrast with the abrupt methods of the sects, the lofty disdain with which she frowns down for the most part, all discussion of national and political questions in her pulpits, leaving loyal and disloyal alike to nestle undisturbed beneath the mantle of her motherly charity, these things many are constrained to believe, constitute some of the strongest threads in that net by whose aid the Episcopal church is becoming such a mighty "fisher of men."

We would not be so uncharitable as to intimate that these instrumentalities are employed only from policy. They who use them undoubtedly believe in them most firmly. But we do say that it is a fact to be deplored that any church should have such an external organization as renders it almost inevitable that it will appeal to the æsthetic nature, before it does to the spiritual, and charm the poetic sensibilities before it lays hold upon the heart. And if the working of the system were not modified and its unfavorable tendencies held in check by the denominations which surround it, we believe in all charity that

the result must be sadly damaging to the cause of evangelical religion.

And if the practical evils of a return to ritualism are great, we believe that the doctrinal evils are still greater. It involves a giving up of that great principle of a regenerate church membership, the corner stone of the whole fabric of evangelical religion in this country, for that which forms its exactly opposite pole, incorporation upon the church through the sacraments or baptismal regeneration.

We know how strenuously this is denied; how constantly evangelical Christians going into the Episcopal communion are disarmed of their scruples on this point by the assurance that this is an obsolete dogma wholly inoperative in the actual life of the church. But the doctrine is in her Prayer Book and however much the church may have been swayed away from it by the influence of Evangelicism, when once that influence is removed she will return to it as inevitably as the deflected needle returns to the pole. Henry Melville has stated the truth with a frankness and precision for which many outside his own communion will thank him. "We really think," he says, "that no fair, no straightforward dealing can get rid of the conclusion that the church holds what is called baptismal regeneration. You may dislike the doctrine; you may wish it expunged from the prayer-book; but so long as I subscribe to that prayer-book, and so long as I officiate according to the forms of that prayer-book, I do not see how I can be commonly honest and yet deny that every baptized person is on that account regenerate." *Sermons*, vol. I., p. 355.

Here is the doctrine so plain that no one can fail to understand it.

Regeneration, instead of being connected with man's conscious choice and personal repentance on the one hand, and with God's elective sovereignty on the other, is disencumbered of both these conditions. Grace flows through the channel of the church, and every person whom the priest chooses to put *en rapport* by baptism, elect or non-elect, unconscious child or unrepentant adult, is thereby regenerated. So far as the subject is concerned it is truly "irresistible grace." Just as a piece of steel held in the hand of the operator, by being brought into contact

with the wire that connects with the galvanic battery becomes galvanized, so the child, too young to exercise repentance or belief in Christ, by the hands of another is put in connection with the church, and through the church the virtue of the Redeemer enters into him to regenerate and renew him. The child has no wish or will in the matter. He exercises no belief. He is made a Christian without his knowledge. His conversion, to use the words of a defender of this doctrine, "antedates conscious choice." Thus faith is divorced from regeneration. The two are no longer necessarily connected. The bands by which Christ wedded them in eternal union are sundered by an *ex-cathedra* verdict.

It is evident, therefore, that the gate through which the tides of irreligion and worldliness have poured into the state churches of Europe till, in many of them, the altar-flame of pure religion has become almost quenched, still stands open; the dogma which in the Lutheran church has virtually neutralized the results of the Reformation, and which still forms the ligature by which she is bound to rationalism and infidelity, is yet in vogue; the doctrine to which the church of England owes that taint in her blood which has lately broken out in such alarming symptoms, and of which by councils and excommunications she has sought in vain to purge herself, still exists, and Christians outside the church are invited to accept it among the blessings of Christian unity.

We have said that a movement towards Episcopacy is a movement from spiritualism to ritualism. We believe we may go still further than this and assert that it is a movement from Protestantism towards Romanism.

We know this charge is often made, but usually in such a way as to imply that the tendency is accidental not necessary, the result of circumstances, not of absolute affinity. But we mean to speak of it as something which is logically inevitable.

"The Episcopal church Romish?" asks Dr. Huntington, with affected horror and surprise at the imputation. And then he proceeds to drown the presumptuous charge with a flood of rhetoric which, gathered up and reduced to the thickest possible consistency, gives only this single argument, viz., that all the

weapons used in fighting against Popery have been drawn from the armory of the Anglican church.

"If all this be so," he adds, "why do these zealous boasters stultify themselves by continually ringing changes on that well-worn saw of Popery in Episcopacy. But more than this, I challenge any body of Christians to produce one tithe of the amount of printed standard authority for doctrines which are anti-papal, as the Protestant Episcopal church can show in her Prayer-book and Homilies." [Article in Boston *Traveller*.] This may be true, and we, on the other hand, challenge any body of Christians to produce one tithe of the amount of authority for doctrines which are papal that the Protestant Episcopal church can show in her Prayer-book and Homilies.

Let any one read that form of absolution found in the "Order for the visitation of the sick," and he can surely have very little doubt on this point. "Our Lord Jesus Christ who hath left power to his church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences; and by his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." There is certainly an ominous sound of Romanism in these words, and however remote Episcopacy may be at some points from Popery, it touches here so closely that very many are utterly unable to discover the place of disjunction. Probably many non-Episcopalians can even credit Dr. Newman when he asserts that one "might hold in the Anglican church a comprecation with the saints with Bramhall, and the Mass, all but transubstantiation, with Andrews, or with Hooker that transubstantiation itself is not a point for churches to part communion upon, or with Hammond that a general council, truly such never did, never shall err in a matter of faith, or with Bull, that man lost inward grace by the fall, or with Thorndike, that penance is a propitiation for post-baptismal sin, or with Pearson, that the all powerful name of Jesus is not otherwise given than in the Catholic church." pp. 135, 137, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*.

Coupling now these facts of doctrine with what, e.g., was recently witnessed in Trinity church, New York, that formal and fraternal recognition of the Russo-Greek church, the tacit

avowal, if we understand it rightly, of that church's claim to fellowship with the Episcopal, the church that holds among her sacraments penance and extreme unction, among her doctrines transubstantiation, the invocation of saints and the worship of the Virgin, and among her customs the virtual worship of relics and crosses and images, and what are we to conclude? That the appeal from the "Christian Unity Society" under whose auspices, if we are not misinformed, the movement just referred to was inaugurated, for all Christians to unite against Popery, is a summons to fight against Romanism or to play into her hands? a call, as it professes to be, for Protestants to unite in helping the unreformed "to throw off the corruption and the burden of the papacy" or to again embrace these corruptions and put themselves beneath these burdens?

For our own part we believe, if any ecclesiastical coalition is demanded, it is one to resist the encroachments of high churchism and thus to carry the outworks of Romanism before attempting to attack its stronghold; and to cut off the means of reinforcement from the enemy before seeking to lay siege to his citadel.

We now come to the assumption on which the greatest stress is laid and that which really constitutes the basis of the whole argument, viz., that the completeness or perfection of church organization is found only in close adherence to the law of organic unity, which law Episcopacy alone of Protestant Christendom has kept. "In full view of all our own unworthiness as individuals and as a church," says the address, "we still claim the right to say to our fellow Christians that our church does offer something for their consideration which is precious. Her great gift is that organic life of which we speak and a conscientious regard for it. She stands on a basis common to Christendom in its best days and to which we believe that Christendom must recur. She represents in short, the principle of organic unity. . . . By organic unity, we mean a common confession maintained in communion with one another and with the church of primitive ages under pastors having a common origin and commission." p. 16, 7.

To those who have been accustomed to think without bias on this subject, a difficulty arises here at the outset.

It is one of the first laws of organic unity if we understand it rightly, that there must be a necessary connection of parts. Mere juxtaposition can not constitute unity, there must be some principle of coherence common to all the elements entering into it. What organic unity is there in the crust of the earth? It consists of strata composed of totally different elements piled one upon another by the process of geological formation. But it is held together by no common life; it is pervaded by no unifying principle. Each stratum is isolated and disconnected.

Now the church, so far as its polity is concerned, consists of certain distinct historical layers. Dr. Shedd has marked them off thus: "There is the Jewish church constitution; then the exceedingly slight and almost invisible constitution of the apostolic church of the first forty or fifty years after the death of Christ; then the more consolidated republicanism of the close of the first and the beginning of the second century; then the dim beginnings of the Episcopate, followed by the established primacy of the Roman bishop in the Western church, and of the Constantinopolitan bishop in the Eastern; then the absolute monarchy of the Romish pope, and the ecclesiastical despotism of the mediæval polity; then, since the Reformation, the revival of all but the last of these forms of polity in the various branches of the Protestant church, together with the continuance of the Papacy and the Patriarchate." *

If this classification be correct one of two things becomes necessary for the claimants of organic unity. To deny that there is a necessary connection between these parts or to avow it. If they deny it, of course they must abandon their claim to organic unity, since the sum and substance of that claim is that they are connected by a regular unbroken line of succession with the apostolic church. If they avow it, they are driven to confess an organic connection with the Roman Catholic church which lies nearest them in the order of sequence, and to acknowledge that that church constitutes one of the vertebræ in the great spinal column of the church.

But they will undoubtedly deny that these different forms of church organization can be traced. No matter. They are

* *Philosophy of History*, p. 115.

compelled to admit that the Romish church at least lies between them and the apostles, and through that, in some form or other, their line of continuity must be established.

Since, however, they profess to regard this church as corrupt and degenerate, the inference is that they hold it to be only a medium of communication and not in any sense a vital part of the succession, that they suppose that within its decay and corruption the germ of the true organic unity was preserved, wrapped up like the Egyptian wheat in the swathes of the mummy, waiting for providence to bring about the necessary conditions for its growth and development. That theory seems certainly to be a philosophical one and one perfectly consistent with the analogies of history.

But this hypothesis being once admitted, why can not those denominations that have sprung from the Episcopal church and who charge that church with being a perversion of the apostolic, rise up and claim that they have been derived from the true germ — the germ of which Episcopacy was the repository — hence that they have the only true succession? What then becomes of the claims of the churchman? If by a legitimate process of exogenous growth they who once constituted the heart of Christianity find themselves pushed outward to its exterior, into the bark and tegument of mere formalism, surely they can not complain that there is any thing anomalous in the position of those who have supplanted them. Least of all can they press with good grace their own claim of still constituting the pith and marrow of the church.

Again, organic unity implies an identity of the original principle from beginning to end. A seed may be reproduced *ad infinitum* but it can never bring forth anything different in kind. It may produce that which is inferior or that which is superior, but never that which is of another species. It is impossible for the wheat to become partially corn, or the corn partially wheat. The moment any foreign element enters into combination with a substance or principle, that moment that substance or principle loses its organic unity. Hence the claimants of organic unity in the church must establish this as a fact; viz., that their form of ordination has remained unchanged from the days of the apostles until now, that no

foreign element has ever entered into combination with it, and remained united with it.

But it is a well attested fact, received on the authority of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, that in the seventh century the Episcopal ordination became blended with the Presbyterian, an ordination which the churchman now declares to be illegitimate. From this historian we learn that in the year 665, there was but a single bishop in all Britain who had been canonically ordained. Nearly all the bishops were of Scottish ordination by Aidan and Finan, who came out of the Culdee Monastery, and were nothing more than Presbyters. *Ecc. Hist. B. III., cs. 3, 4, 28, etc.*

Baxter says, remarking on the testimony of Bede: "You will find that the English had a succession of bishops of the Scottish presbyter's ordination, and there is no mention in Bede of any scruple of the lawfulness of the course."

Since we thus have the record not only of the existence of the Presbyterian ordination in the English church, but of its perpetuation, it is clear that another strand has become intertwined with the threefold cord of Episcopacy, and we cannot see, unless the church repudiates its own principle of genealogical succession, how it can ever be worked out.

The whole matter of organic unity and apostolic succession seems to us exceedingly dubious to say the least.

When we see the difficulty of tracing the line distinctly even up to the Romish church, when within the Romish church we find at one time three pontiffs, each denouncing the others as usurpers; * contested elections and decrees of councils, rendering null appointments already existing; when we find it confessed on all hands, that it is impossible to determine who the first seven bishops of Rome were, it seems to us absolute presumption for any person on earth to claim to be a legal or lineal successor to the apostles.

And the scripture argument for any such succession of the priesthood is still more unsatisfactory. As drawn out by its advocates, it impresses one as almost unparalleled in the annals of forced interpretation, two or three texts being made to bear up the whole superstructure of argument against hun-

* Vide Milman's *Hist. of Latin Christianity*, vol. III., p. 232.

dreds whose genius is most obviously opposed to it; nine parts of conclusion being found to every one part of premise, all reminding one most forcibly of Coleridge's description of such interpretations as "smoke-like wreaths of inference," or an "ever-widening spiral *ergo* from the narrow aperture of perhaps a single text."

The boon therefore which is offered us in organic unity, as here defined, we are constrained to say has no special value or preciousness to us for the reason that we cannot appreciate our need of it.

We see no necessity of drawing the life which we receive from Christ through a channel so long and tortuous that to explore it is an impossible task, or of tracing our descent from his apostles through a lineage so obscure that we can not tell whether we are sons or bastards. We believe in a Christ as the Head of the church who lives and reigns forever, who not only holds his mysterious union with his church still unbroken, but constantly energizes and reinforces that church by fresh infusions of his life; so that the vitality of the children does not depend upon the vitality of their ancestors. We believe his union with his church is direct not mediate, a union of incorporation not of remote connection. And hence it matters little whether we are connected with the original branches of the True Vine, as long as that Vine is capable of thrusting out fresh shoots alike for the church and for its ministry.

Nor do we place any special value on the Christian unity advocated in the pamphlet. We do not think that it is the kind of unity most needed. It is not so much a unity of creeds that is wanted. The church can not be held together by any such paper tenure. It is not so much a unity of mere external conformity, that is demanded. For it is impossible to make all men pull in the same ecclesiastical harness. But it is the unity of the spirit, a common life, holding together all the separate members of Christ's body, consolidating all their diverse activities, and harmonizing more and more their conflicting tendencies.

And in spite of external differences, in spite of sectarian walls and party lines, we believe that that unity does exist, underlying the manifoldness of external organization and shap-

ing what often seems lamentable discordance, into a steady and disciplined progress towards perfect oneness in Christ.

Truth is one, and if in its passage through the human mind it becomes refracted, it may be only that by its many colored rays it may the better commend itself to the varied wants and capacities of mankind, different orders of the church visible, holding forth and rendering conspicuous the different doctrines which, in the church invisible, are all blended into unity.

For any one of the coördinate branches of the church, therefore, to attempt to bring about a greater unity by setting forth its own pattern and polity as that which must be conformed to, exactly or approximately by all, will necessarily be of little use. No sectarian plea against sectarianism, no partizan tirade against religious partizanship will be of any avail. But whatever brings the church into nearer accordance with the spirit of Christ and his Gospel, whatever exalts into prominence the central and centralizing truths of our common faith will do most towards promoting that unity for which we all hope and pray. In the beautiful words of the author of the "*Patience of Hope*," "the bosom of Christ is the grave, the only grave of religious acrimony; we learn secrets there which render it possible for us to be of one heart, if we may not yet be of one mind with all who lean upon it with us. For slightly as we may think to heal long-festered hurts, there is no cure for religious dissension except that of spiritual acquaintance with God, as revealed to us in the mind and spirit of Christ Jesus. To acquaint ourselves thus with God, is to be at peace, for it is to learn how far more strong than all which separates, is that which unites us in him. So long as the external is more to us than the vital, the accidental dearer than the essential, so long, in short, as we are more churchmen, more Protestants, more anything than Christians, religious acerbity will continue."

ARTICLE V.

SHORT SERMONS.

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.—*Rom. x. 4.*

To make known the way of salvation is the end for which the Gospel is preached. Yet how few that hear understand. All his life long a man will listen to the preaching of the Word, and when he comes to die be unable to give any good account of the ground of his hope. It is, that he prays, or that God is good, or that he has always done his best. What he has to do with the law which he has transgressed, or with Christ that died, he can not tell. The text declares it.

I. The perfect righteousness of the law is required of every man.

1. This is evident from its nature. It is moral; the moral law of God. It requires that they whom God has created in his own image do right; that they be pure, upright, holy, perfect. Its claims are based upon its nature, and the nature and relations of those whom it commands. They may destroy their own power to obey; nevertheless it abides, immutable, like its Author; it was proclaimed at Mount Sinai and has never been repealed.

2. Christ re-affirmed it with emphasis in his ministry. As he came expressly to save men, its claims will be abated now if ever. But what does he say? "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." It is binding forever. "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." With still more fearful emphasis Paul "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

II. How are these immutable demands of God's perfect law to be met? Christ is the end of the law for righteousness.

1. By his death he made atonement for transgression. There was a full satisfaction of the claims of violated law. Christ was our substitute, endured the penalty of our transgressions, bore our sins in his own body on the tree.

2. By his life in the flesh he provided for us a perfect righteousness. This was no less necessary than his death to satisfy all the requirements of God's law.

3. The benefits of Christ's life and death are imputed to us

through our faith. To every one that believeth he is the end of the law for righteousness, and to none others. "He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."

1. The subject illustrates the infinite, everlasting obligation of the redeemed to Christ. "Washed, sanctified, justified." All by Christ.

2. Shows us what will be the burden of the everlasting song. "Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God." "Blessing, honor, glory, power!"

"And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down: for to-day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully."—*Luke xix. 5, 6.*

If there is anything in the New Testament which bears a strong resemblance to myth, the account of Zaccheus assuredly does. Our Lord, having just wrought one of his most impressive miracles, is passing through Jericho, attended and followed by a crowd of people. A well-known citizen of the place, of mean personal appearance and still meaner calling and reputation, a deputy Jew publican, despised and scorned by all good and respectable men, yet of great wealth, has conceived, for some unknown reason, a desire to see Jesus, and failing in his attempt, by reason of his small stature and the closeness of the throng, he climbs up into a sycamore tree by the roadside in advance, and observes carefully the form and countenance of the Son of man as he comes near. Jesus sees him, reads with omniscient eye, what is passing in his heart, addresses him kindly, and with his own peculiar wisdom, and goes with him, overjoyed at the unexpected honor to his house, while the astonished multitude scoffs. Zaccheus, up to this very day the rapacious and proscribed chief of the publicans, stands up in the presence of Christ and of his own household, and declares his intention to make restitution fourfold to any he may have wronged in the collection of taxes, and not this only, but to give one half of all his wealth to the poor. In this way he will manifest his attachment to the Saviour. That it is no sudden fit of enthusiasm, or temporary excitement, is made certain by the fact that Christ commends his conduct and pronounces him a genuine disciple, this very day brought into the kingdom. The history conveys lessons of great value.

1. We should obey every secret impulse to come near to Christ. This is felt, often, amid the press of worldly thoughts and pursuits

and company and pleasures. Let it be heeded without delay. It may be a gracious visitation, and the last.

2. The readiness of Christ to come to us exceeds all our expectations. Moved by a new and strange impulse, we turn aside from the crowd if, haply, we may catch a glimpse of his face, or hear his voice, and, lo, he comes home with us to our house and our heart.

3. The favor of Jesus Christ fills the heart with abounding joy. Into what a happy man is Zaccheus transformed in a single hour! The possession of all his wealth never imparted to him a thousandth part of the satisfaction which he finds in giving half of it away.

4. The grace of God makes a man upright. The covetous, grasping, close-fisted man may join the church, may pray, exhort, and pour out, in a dreary stream, his tongue philanthropy, which neither warms nor feeds a single soul, but he is not a Christian.

5. The Gospel awakens and the Master approves a large liberality. Zaccheus did no wrong to his children, though he may have had half a score. On the contrary, he did the best thing to promote their worldly prosperity, and their souls' salvation. His example is not our rule; but the prevailing liberality of our day falls very far short of proving that salvation is come to the house.

ARTICLE VI.

LITERARY NOTICES.

- 1.—*Annals of the American Pulpit*; or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of the Various Denominations, with Historical Introductions. By WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D.D. Volume VIII. Unitarian Congregational. pp. xxv, 578. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. 1865.

SUBSTANTIALLY this is a gallery of Unitarian clergymen done by surviving friends and mostly of the same religious sect. This plan discovers its advantages in the present volume even more obviously than in its predecessors. While it gives great variety and vivacity to these sketches, throwing just the light upon the successive pictures which best brings out their distinctive features, it shifts, as is simply right, the responsibility for opinions and judgments concerning the various matters involved from the editor to the respective writers of these memorials. Dr. Sprague has thus been able to give free scope to these gentlemen to vindicate and eulogize their

departed friends, without at all lending his sanction to their verdicts. Equally, that denomination can have no ground to charge a misrepresentation of individual opinions and of general character and influence, as it is made essentially its own biographer. It should not, however, be inferred from this, that the Doctor's work, in these pages, has been merely to arrange other people's manuscripts for the press. Besides the immense labor of finding and setting in motion these subsidiary pens, he has had the herculean task of methodizing, balancing, supplementing the whole mass of material. Several of the sketches in each volume are entirely his own, and generally the substratum of biographical facts has been furnished from his inexhaustible antiquarianism.

The great literary and historical merit of this whole series of massive volumes is too well known to need further commendation. We shall, instead of this, give the rest of our space to some special points of interest in this volume.

One thing, which at once arrests the reader, is the difference, we had almost said, *toto cælo*, between the earlier and the later Unitarianism. The catalogue of these founders of that church begins with Dr. Gay of Hingham, 1717: and the first half of its eighty names takes up the lives of men who, to-day, would find themselves houseless and homeless in the churches which here are polishing their sepulchres. Their dissent from the Westminster Catechism, which many of them taught in their schools through life, was almost entirely limited to difficulties concerning the Divine Trinity, and the electing purpose of God. They called themselves High Arians on the former point, and Arminians on the latter. Here and there one, like Chauncy, denied the eternity of future punishments. But of this eminent controversialist, it is here written by a personal friend, that "he possessed and enjoyed a firm and unwavering faith in the truth and inspiration of the Scriptures, and in the impossibility of their having been written but by the supernatural inspiration of God." Dr. Henry Cummings taught Christ's "voluntary humiliation and death, when he made his soul an offering for sin," and "had no sympathy with any system that does not recognize the mediation of Christ as the grand feature of the Christian economy." Dr. Jeremy Belknap did not think it wrong to sing praises to Christ and the Holy Spirit as the Redeemer and Sanctifier; he gave his "ready assent" to the doctrine of "the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost" as "the one living and true God," and adds: "certain it is that Socinians reject such kind of language, and disavow the notion of a Trinity in any form; not now to say anything of the *atonement* which they universally deny, but which those I am defend

ing as strenuously maintain." p. 81. Dr. Ripley of Concord, reminds his hearers, in a half century sermon, that he had fully preached "the early apostasy of man, moral human depravity, regeneration . . . and the need of Divine influence to effect that change; justification through faith in Christ to all who repent and obey the Gospel; Jesus Christ, . . . the meritorious agent and medium of mercy to penitent sinners; . . . a judgment to come by the Son of God, when the wicked will go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal." p. 115. Dr. John Reed says that, beside all else, Christ's death was "requisite as an atoning sacrifice. His precious blood was the price of our redemption. . . . As Mediator, he suffered and died for our offences. He exchanged his own innocent, meritorious life for our guilty, forfeited lives. The iniquities of us all were laid upon him. He bore the punishment due to our sins in his own body on the tree, that we might be pardoned and acquitted." p. 146. We have heard *this* denied within two months, in an Orthodox Congregational Association. Dr. Howard of Springfield, "held to the doctrine of atonement, in the sense of propitiation or expiation, with the utmost tenacity." He defended a "vicarious" atonement, p. 184; and to the author of a sermon denying this, he wrote, after strongly stating this Scriptural doctrine: "is not the author of such a sermon guilty of deep, deep, deep ingratitude to Him who loved us with a love stronger than death; and, when we were enemies, gave his life a ransom for us?" p. 184.

What would such men have done in the late Unitarian Convention at New York? In one point, however, we trace a resemblance. These early "liberals" as even then they called themselves, had about the same horror of *Creeds* as their present posterity. They repudiated them, and thus opened one wide door to the utterly antichristian position of the van of Unitarianism to-day.

They denied the Athanasian statement of the Trinity, and chiefly for this were regarded as heretical. It has occurred to us whether the admission of that doctrine, with the rejection of a true and proper atonement for sin, is enough to save the orthodoxy of a man now? Did the Fathers make that, rather than this, "the article of a standing or falling church?" How much is the confession of the Trinity worth, with the denial of Christ's vicarious expiation for human sin?

We are strongly impressed with the great personal and literary accomplishments of a series of young preachers who, from about the year 1812, mostly occupied the pulpits of Boston and its environs,

and would appear to have been the objects of an almost idolatrous popularity among their adherents. But, so far as we can conclude respecting the real sympathy of most of them with the Gospel, the story told by Toplady (III, 328,) of an eminent divine of his day, would nearly express the result. "Do not tell me of St. Paul, madam" (said the clergyman :) "it would have been happy for the Christian church, if St. Paul had never wrote a line of his epistles."

This volume, like its predecessors, sparkles with clerical *facetiae*. Old Dr. Gay of Hingham missed some of his hay of nights. At length, he took a dark lantern, and so planted himself as to detect the thief. He came, in due time; went into the barn; came out with a back load of hay, when the Doctor stepped up behind and thrust the candle right into the bundle, setting it into a bright blaze. The man ran for his life, never mistrusting the cause of his discomfiture. In a day or two, he came and confessed his theft to the Doctor saying that the Lord had sent fire from heaven and burned his ill-gotten plunder, and promised never again to break the eighth commandment. The Doctor never let him know who set him afire. Dr. West's singers got into a musical fuss, and threatened not to perform their part of the Sunday service. Up rose the Doctor the next Lord's day morning and read the hymn, saying emphatically, that they would begin with the second stanza :

" Let those refuse to sing
Who never knew our God."

The hymn was sung. This same New Bedford pastor had a tall helpmeet named Experience. He used to say that he had "learned from *long Experience* that it was a good thing to be married." Dr. Gad Hitchcock of Pembroke was a character. Overtaking a sailor on the road to Boston, the Doctor asked him if he could box the compass. The sailor did it. "Now," said the Doctor, "reverse it." This was promptly done. The sailor then inquired after his occupation, and finding that he was a clergyman, asked him to repeat certain texts of Scripture. The Doctor repeated them. "Now," said the sailor, "reverse them." The Doctor confessed that he was weathered on that tack; and used to repeat the joke with great glee. Dr. Chauncey's habits were most methodical. "At twelve o'clock, he took a pinch of snuff, and only one in twenty-four hours." The first time a prayer was made, so it is said, at a funeral in Boston, was by Dr. Chauncey at Dr. Mayhew's burial, so jealous were our ancestors of any approach to Popish practices.

But we must stop, only advising our intelligent readers to procure these volumes, and turn them over leisurely when they want a high intellectual treat. The letters which they contain constitute a mass

of epistolary literature unmatched in its kind, by any similar collection in our language.

2.—*History of England from the fall of Wolsey to the death of Elisabeth.* By JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE, M.A., late Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford. Two vols. pp. 447, 501. New York: Charles Scribner & Co. [Boston: Lee & Shepard.] 1865.

How would Robert Hall have rejoiced in such exquisitely beautiful books as these. That great preacher and orator would suffer no discourse of his to be published except on the best paper and in large, clear type, believing that this would have much to do with his literary reputation. If this be the test, Mr. Froude's reputation is safe, for more elegant volumes than these the Elzevirs themselves never sent forth of their best Angoulême paper. It is only just to say that this new *History of England* is worthy of the form in which it appears. It is a work of rare ability. The author succeeds admirably in doing what, in the opening sentence of the first volume, he says is so difficult: "to throw ourselves back into a time in which for centuries the European world grew upon a single type." He makes us the delighted companions of his travels through oft-explored regions, finding for us many a rich picture which others had passed by, or exhibited in a light so different that it was not the same. He shakes the dust from old chronicles, and reads to us with the captivating simplicity of the most humble and ingenuous inquirer after truth, passages out of state records or familiar letters which possess the charm at once of romantic personal narration, and grave historic evidence in scenes of deepest tragic interest, where kings and queens and prelates and courtiers are the actors. He never offends us by the loud voice or the positive air of the partisan or the polemic; seems to desire nothing so much as truth; weighs testimony with the candor and the carefulness of a judge; is cautious and almost sorrowful in admitting conclusions which leave a stain on reputations hitherto without spot, and differs, because he must, with eminent authorities whose verdict the republic of letters, and the world in general, have been content to accept. It need occasion no surprise that Mr. Froude distrusts the innocence of Anne Boleyn, where the conflicting character of the testimony makes a very positive decision in either direction rather difficult, as we must believe. But that he should put himself forth in these volumes as the bold defender of Henry has awakened no little astonishment, and is in keeping with the fact that he leaves the character of Anne blackened all over with deepest guilt.

In the Feudal System our author finds a beautiful and beneficent

arrangement, kings and lords being nursing fathers, and all the people children. Of Catholicism he says; Vol. 1. p. 323. "Excommunication was, in real earnest, the death of the soul, at a time when communion with the church was the only means by which the soul could be made partaker of the divine life; and it was a noble thing to believe that there was something worse for a man than legal penalties on his person or on his mortal body; it was beautiful to recognize in an active living form, that the heaviest ill which could befall a man was to be cut off from God. But it is only for periods that humanity can endure the atmosphere of these high altitudes of morality."

It is unnecessary to say to our readers that, with all the beauty of his rich literary culture, the captivating simplicity of his style, and his apparent ingenuousness and love of truth, we do not regard the author of the "Nemesis of Faith" and brilliant quondam contributor to the pages of the Westminster Review as a safe guide in matters of religious belief. We presume this issue is to be followed by the remaining two volumes of Mr. Froude's History. These volumes, extending to the execution of Anne Boleyn and Henry's hasty marriage to Jane Seymour, were first published in England in 1856, and the 3rd and 4th in 1858.

3—*History of Congregationalism from about A. D. 250 to the Present Time.* In continuation of the account of the origin and earliest History of this system of church polity contained in "A View of Congregationalism." By GEORGE PUNCHARD. Second Edition. Rewritten and greatly enlarged. Vols. I., II. pp. 562, 519. New York: Hurd & Houghton. Boston: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1865.

In these two elegant volumes from the Riverside Press, to be followed in due time by a third, we have the well digested fruits of long and patient research in a most interesting and important department of History. The work is as candid and impartial as it is discriminating and thorough. There is no attempt to build up a theory on slender foundations or no foundations at all; bold assumption for historical fact, or shallow and ridiculous misinterpretation of Scripture; no forcing of broad conclusions from invisible premises. The author has shown, with singular ability, and with a true philosophical insight in the use of his materials, that the simple scriptural and primitive polity has never ceased out of the earth; but that, when driven from the city by the pride of hierarchies or the wicked ambition of statesmen and politicians, it has taken refuge, like the faith with which it has been allied, "in deserts and

in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." In every age and country it has lifted up a protestant voice against corruption, and has held fast the simple institutions of Christ and his apostles: this, oftentimes amid poverty and proscription and disgrace and persecution. Such in the early centuries, were the Novations, the Donatists, the Luciferians and the Paulicians; and in more recent times the Waldenses and Albigenses, Wickliffe and his poor Lollards and the Puritans in the days of James and Elisabeth.

Along with the history of Congregationalism we have, necessarily, an exhibition of the contemporary sects, often the dominant church powers. If in connection with these there is, almost as a rule, priestly assumption and lordly pride, with the not infrequent bursting forth of the spirit of bitter, relentless persecution, this is not the fault of the author, but, assuredly, it is suggestive as to where lies the truth in this great matter of ecclesiastical polity.

We think there is a lack of fulness in the author's statement of the nature and prerogatives of councils, on page 2. We regard this as a point of very great importance. Our own very decided views in relation to it are presented in the article in our present number on Congregational Polity, Usages and Law.

These volumes are worthy of the beautiful form in which they appear. That they will be very extensively read, and will strengthen mightily the conviction of the divine appointment and transcendent value of our simple Congregational order and discipline we should be very sorry to doubt.

4.—*Life of Marcus Tullius Cicero.* By WILLIAM FORSYTH, M.A., Q. C., &c., &c. 2 vols. 12mo. pp. 364, 341. With Illustrations. New York: Charles Scribner & Co. [Boston: Lee & Shepard.] 1865.

WITH excellent judgment and literary taste, the author gives us a clear, compact, living biography of this old Roman, as an indefatigable student, a hard working lawyer, a matchless orator, an eager and not always successful politician, a country gentleman, a brilliant man of letters, a husband, father, friend. The work is variously and intensely interesting. The writer, an eminent juriconsult, portrays this great luminary of his own profession with a manifest desire to "nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice." It is most instructive to see so clearly how such a man was formed to wield such power, and live so long in the world's admiration. It is fascinating to follow him through his perilous career, and sad unutterably to look in upon the social and public viciousness which made

the Rome of his day a foulest sewer of utter prostitution to reeking and reckless sin.

Cicero, in comparison with the most eminent even of his consensors and citizens, was not only a respectable, but an exemplary moralist. While they befouled themselves with bribery, perjury, licentiousness, spoliation, bestial excesses which may not be named, the worst than can be said of him is that he was excessively self-conceited, and a political trimmer. This made him inconsistent with himself, and, toward the end, kept him in a feverish vacillation between the patronage of the rivals, Cæsar and Pompey, as a choice of protectors from obviously hastening dangers. He was a conservative constitutionalist, wedded to historic precedents and traditions, averse to change. But the Republic was worn out. There was no life, only rotten death, in the lion's skin. A wretched, "fishpond" aristocracy was trembling before a vicious, lawless, encroaching populace; and Cæsar was on the road to grasp both, and the whole nationality, in his strong hand. But when the final moments arrived, and Rome was in her agony, Cicero proved himself worthy of the crisis, and showed a courage in denouncing Anthony which he had not ventured to oppose to Cæsar.

This imperial leader does not fare so well in Mr. Forsyth's treatment, as in Merrivale's and especially, Louis Napoleon's. His intentions and true historic verdict is the *quæstio vexatissima* of the critics. Certainly, he was a great, bad man personally. And if his political creed had but the one article in it, of self-aggrandizement, he was no worse than his chief compeers. But we keep this issue open. Meantime, scholars and all intelligent readers will peruse with keen delight these pictures of ancient life. The accounts given here of the circumstantial details of Cicero's immortal orations—for what, how, where, they were delivered, are fresh and graphic. The citations from his letters are full of light upon the private life of their author and his friends. The sketches of such men as Verres, Cataline, Clodius, Milo, Marc Anthony, besides others more famous, make us acquainted with them almost as we know our own contemporaries. This work will doubtless become the standard Life of the most eloquent of all the ancients, save one; and, in varied learning and accomplishment, by far the superior of the two.

5.—*Sermons of Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.* Preached at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London. Eighth Series. 12mo. pp. 380. New York: Sheldon & Co. Boston: Gould & Lincoln. 1865.

THE day is passed for the criticism which attempted to snuff out Mr. Spurgeon by suggesting the insertion of an *l* after the second

letter of his name. There are six or eight thousand intelligent persons in the city of London, who are pleased to listen to his discourses year after year. He has not won the place of an elegant or learned Christian orator; he has not sought it. He has won the first place as a popular and powerful minister of the Gospel, and he stands to-day as the centre of a most effective organization for training preachers of his own stamp, and for missionary work amidst the millions of the ignorant and debased population of the British metropolis. There is not a clerical dignitary in the British Islands who is wielding so much personal influence as this preacher at the new Tabernacle.

This volume contains nineteen sermons of the same direct, fresh, salient, colloquial stamp as its predecessors; enforced with a vigorous, home-thrusting logic, pricking along their way with many a spear point of sharp allusion to current interests, and ever and anon gushing out in warm emotion. The famous sermon on "Baptismal Regeneration" is here, and another entitled, "Children brought to Christ, not to the Font." We fully agree that neither children or adults are brought to Christ savingly through the font or the river or any other sort of baptism. Mr. S. has made this plain enough; but his argument will not reverse the right of the children of believers to be dedicated to God by water, so long as the Abrahamic Covenant continues to be the basis of the Christian church. We take our doctrinal exceptions to Mr. S.'s statements here and there; and at the same time bid him God-speed in publishing a living Christianity to this growingly formalistic age.

6.—*Reason in Religion.* By FREDERIC HENRY HEDGE. 12mo. pp. 462. Boston: Walker, Fuller & Co. 1865.

THE Unitarian sect has no more active and elastic intellect at its command than that of this prolific writer. He is a sort of flying artillery to that body of rationalizing thinkers. We never read him without a sense of mental stimulation, and also of regret that his fine powers and culture are not at the service of gospel Christianity. He does not seem to be settled upon a fixed doctrinal basis, but often takes positions which appear to be almost as wide of the received dogmas of his own church as of ours. He swoops about in the firmament on a strong, unsteady wing, seeking rest like Noah's raven, above the deluge. This volume is a valuable commentary upon the insufficiency of the human reason to elaborate sound religious truth, in the loftier connections of it, without a firm belief in the plenary inspiration of the Word of God. It is full of intellectual life and beauty, and contains many admirable thoughts. It should

be read as an authentic *exposé* of current Liberalistic theology and religious philosophy, of the most respectable type.

7. — *Essays, Historical and Biographical, Political, Social, Literary and Scientific.* By HUGH MILLER. Edited with a Preface by Peter Bayne. 12mo. pp. 501. Boston: Gould & Lincoln. 1865.

HUGH MILLER is still a marvel to us. So versatile, graceful, able and prolific a pen is not often taken in hand. His works follow each other through the press as if he were still living and writing. Nor was all the best wine served first. This new volume will amply repay the literary and general student. Here are essays worthy of the Spectator or Rambler, in style and substance. It is a great compliment to the newspaper press when a volume of such articles can be gathered from its columns. And what pleases us much in them, is their practical and profitable as well as deeply interesting nature. This publishing house have added a worthy volume to their so uniformly good list.

8. — *Christianity and Statesmanship, with Kindred Topics.* By WILLIAM HAGUE, D.D. New and enlarged Edition. 12mo. pp. xvi, 414. Boston: Gould & Lincoln. 1865.

No themes are so deep and far reaching as those which legitimately come under this title. As time rolls on and civilization advances, new applications of Christian truth to social and public affairs are continually claiming attention. The author of this volume has addressed himself to the discussion of these topics with equal earnestness and ability. Several of these essays grew out of the conflict of thought incident upon our great struggle with Southern absolutism. Others of them are of a more general character. Dr. Hague brings to his aid a clear, vigorous style, good taste, a warm sympathy with things around him, a serviceable knowledge of history, and a catholic spirit. This book is timely, and of permanent value.

9. — *Our Country: Its Trials and its Triumph.* A series of Discourses suggested by the varying events of the War for the Union. By GEORGE PECK, D. D. 12mo. pp. 300. New York: Carlton & Porter. [Boston: J. P. Magee.] 1865.

SOME thousands of sermons, lying in manuscript in our pastors' studies, might but never will tell, in print, the history of the past four years. They sprung into life from the heart and brain of the watchmen on our Zion's walls, as the varying fortunes of the mighty conflict called for a pulpit recognition and discussion of the stirring

alternations of defeat and triumph. Could they be published and read, they would tell, in most positive terms, how thoroughly true our Northern pulpits have mostly been to the good cause. But they have been heard, and have powerfully helped to nerve the nation to its heroic and gigantic work. This volume is a collection of one man's contributions to these not political but military and national discourses. They are outspoken, radical, rather loosely jointed in spots, in a word, good Methodist preaching on the popular topics of the day.

- 10.—*Zulu-Land ; or, Life among the Zulu Kafirs of Natal and Zulu Land, South Africa.* With Maps and Illustrations, largely from Original Photographs. By Rev. LEWIS GROUT. For fifteen years Missionary of the American Board in South Africa, author of the Grammar of the Zulu Language, and Corresponding Member of the American Oriental Society. 12mo. pp. 351. Presbyterian Publication Committee, Philadelphia.

MR. GROUT brings the good qualifications to bear in producing this book, namely, experience, observation, judgment in the use of materials, ability to make the record and a hearty good will in his work. In this volume we have a lively outline of South African History, its state as seen by the early voyagers, its natural features, its *fauna* and *flora*, climate, early settlements, the Dutch and the English there, the native tribes with their government, social life, superstitions, matrimonial customs, business enterprise and Christian Missions. The book is full of facts, incidents and sketches, all drawn with a lively pen and full of instruction. Reckoning the volumes on Africa that a few years have produced, this abused and neglected land is now a fascinating and prolific field for authorship.

- 11.—*The Isizulu. A Grammar of the Zulu Language, accompanied with a Historical Introduction, also with an Appendix.* By Rev. LEWIS GROUT, etc. 8vo. pp. vii. 432. May & Davis, Natal. Trübner & Co., London. 1858.

IN 1846 the author, being about to leave New England for the Zulus as a Missionary, desired to study their language in this country. In his search for materials, "a few Kafir words from the writings of travellers, in defective orthography, and a few remarks and examples in Kay's Researches," were the meagre result of his gleaning. Nor was his success much more on his arrival at Natal. Boyce's Grammar of fifty manuscript pages, and a grammatical outline by Dr. Adams were all. In the intervals of arduous missionary labor between 1853 and 1859 this work was prepared. Of the diffi-

culties in the way of such an enterprise we can form but feeble conceptions, nor are we competent to criticise the production itself. It is one of those many missionary tributes to civilization, commerce, science and Christianity, offered quietly in the modesty of our religion, but of vast moment in the progress of the age. In writing out the Zulu language, Mr. Grout has adopted with some new and necessary diacritical marks, the Universal Alphabet of Dr. Lepsius, now quite generally approbated by the leading Missionary Societies.

- 12.—*Annual of Scientific Discovery*: or Year Book of Facts in Science and Art for 1865. Edited by DAVID A. WELLS, A. M., M. D. 12mo. pp. 370. Boston: Gould & Lincoln. 1865.

ALL that has been done, and something that has been attempted and not done, during a twelvemonth, in the physical departments of knowledge, will be found in these crowded pages. Petroleum and pre-adamic human fossils, shooting stars and submarine torpedoes, and a thousand other things, are here on an airing in the swaddling clothes of infancy, or the full suits of grown up age. These necessarily condensed papers are not necessarily dry reading, as that on Music, and some of the experiments upon Light, demonstrate. It is a marvellously curious and instructive record, piling up new proofs that there are more things in heaven and earth than are yet dreamed of in anybody's philosophy.

- 13.—*Life in Heaven*. By the author of "Heaven our Home," and "Meet for Heaven." Boston: Roberts Brothers. 12mo. pp. 273. 1865.

Books upon heaven are useful as they tend to prepare us for its pure service and worship: they are the reverse of this as they merely stimulate and attempt to gratify curiosity concerning the special life of that world of glory. There is much in this author's works upon this subject which subserves the first of these ends: too much, in our judgment which is overwrought, fanciful, speculative respecting the social laws of that "undiscovered country." We are not sure but excessive reading of this kind fosters a sentimental rather than a vigorous piety, a dreamy rather than a wakeful, watchful habit of soul.

- 14.—*Autumn Leaves*. By SAMUEL JACKSON GARDNER. 16mo. pp. 301. New York: Hurd & Houghton. 1865.

A MISCELLANY on topics common and uncommon, in prose and verse, a reprint we should judge of various magazine and newspaper

articles, with perhaps some juvenile compositions. Almost any taste or fancy would find something among these seventy topics to interest and instruct.

- 15.—*The Iliad of Homer, rendered into English Blank Verse.* By EDWARD EARL OF DERBY. In two volumes. 12mo. pp. 440, 457. New York: Charles Scribner & Co. [Boston: Lee & Shepard.] 1865.

THE elegant leisure of a British nobleman has given the literary public this successful translation of the old bard "of Scio's rocky isle." University culture thus survives the wear and tear of political life, gracing the brow of the active, hard-working statesman with the more enduring academic wreath. This version of Homer occupies a place between the free flowing paraphrase of Pope, and the severely literal and dry translation by Cowper. It is graceful, energetic, idiomatic, with as near an approach to the strength and fire of the Homeric numbers as is perhaps attainable in our English tongue. We much prefer its blank verse to either the rhymed measure of Pope or the English hexameter. And yet, we do not despair of something better than any thing thus far accomplished in this line. If Mr. Tennyson would but do the whole *Iliad* in the style of the Fragment at the end of his *Enoch Arden*, our wishes would be well satisfied. There is a lack of care in making this reprint. It is a wonder to see how an old book like this holds on to the human heart, stirring its depths with an ever fresh power, while the critics are yet debating whether there ever was a Trojan war, or whether its great poet ever had an individual existence. These volumes are in the faultlessly beautiful style of the Cambridge press—a luxury of paper, type, and form.

- 16.—*A Commentary on the Lord's Prayer.* By REV. H. DENTON, M. A. Edited and Enlarged by Rev. Henry J. Fox, M. A. 16mo. pp. 208. New York: Carlton & Porter. [Boston: J. P. Magee.] 1865.

THIS is a Commentary only in the sense of a general exposition. It attempts no minute exegesis, but explains the text in a devout and edifying way. We do not see how it fills the vacancy suggested by the American Editor: "There have been numerous volumes of sermons, discourses, lectures, etc., on the Lord's Prayer published in this Country, but nothing, to the best of the Editor's knowledge, in the form of a distinct Commentary." Something in the exhaustive form of the treatment of this Prayer in Tholuck's "Sermon on the Mount" would supply this want—not this volume. The author contends for the canonicity of the doxology which closes these peti-

tions. He uniformly spells the word "daily" — *dayly*, for which we find no authority.

17. — *Companion Poets for the People*. Illustrated. Boston: Ticknor & Fields. Nos. 1 and 2. Longfellow and Tennyson. 1865.

THE compilers and publishers of this new series of what must be a popular favorite, have made an excellent beginning of it in these poems by Longfellow and Tennyson. The idea is most commendable. Cheap literature of this high character is the only means of crowding out from our railway book-stalls, our periodical depots, and similar marts, the wretched dime trash which is now filling them, as the frogs filled the bread-troughs of Egypt. Similar selections from other standard authors will follow. Let the publishers have a generous patronage.

18. — *The Work of Preaching Christ. A Charge*. By CHARLES PETIT MCILVAINE, D.D., D.C.L. 2d Edition. 16mo. pp. 72. New York: A. D. F. Randolph. 1864.

IN compliance with the venerable bishop's request, we have read through this treatise. It lays down what is not, and what is preaching Christ, with gospel simplicity, Calvinistic soundness, and Christian devoutness. It is old truth well put for present use. A fair interpretation of its positions will give the pulpit latitude enough to cover all legitimate demands, and will hold it, by a strong cord, to the cross and throne of the One Mediator.

19. — *Idyls of Battle and Poems of the Rebellion*. By HOWARD GLYN-DON, (Laura Redden.) 16mo. pp. 152. New York; Hurd & Houghton. 1864.

IT is interesting to notice how variously our national struggle has enlisted authorship. Almost every department of literature shows the crimson tinge of our conflict. The poet has felt the movement, and causes and effects, principles, facts, incidents, struggles, sacrifices and heroism, have gone on the indelible record of the Muse. This volume of fifty three fugitive productions has much of the true grace, inspiration and lofty genius of the poet. Some of its passages possess rare beauty, and are sent forth in most worthy dress by its popular publishing house.

20. — *A Year in China: and a Narrative of Capture and Imprisonment, when homeward bound, on board the rebel pirate Florida*. By Mrs. H. DWIGHT WILLIAMS, author of "Voices from the Silent Land." With an Introductory note by William Cullen Bryant. 16 mo. pp.

362. New York: Hurd & Houghton. [Boston: Nichols & Noyes.] 1864.

A voyage to China, with lively sketches of a great many ports between, wanderings there, and all the thousand and one things seen, heard and felt among the Celestials graphically shown, and in returning, a capture by the rebels—all this good material for a most interesting book is well used and will richly repay the reading.

ARTICLE VII.

THE ROUND TABLE.

THE NATIONAL CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL. It is a rare commendation of our ecclesiastical polity that it can take care of itself. It has not needed stated Convocations of the churches, a Book for uniformity in doctrine and government, and Courts upper and lower. So in keeping has it been with the Scriptures, the genius of our democratic government, and the common sense of an intelligent constituency, that it has lived without nursing, spread without guidance and both grown strong itself and with its overplus of vigor built up rival polities.

It need not, therefore, seem strange that the late Boston Council is only the third national one in the history of this continent. In 1648 the Council meeting in Cambridge adopted a platform of church government and the Westminster Catechism as its creed. In 1680, a similar Council at Boston reaffirmed this polity and faith, for substance, while adopting the Savoy Confession of 1658. And now, after a lapse of one hundred and eighty five years, Congregationalism regathers itself. Its three thousand churches assemble by delegates from the shores of our two oceans and the wide domain between.

It was exceedingly gratifying to find that we held to the same creed and platform that our Puritan fathers rejoiced in. Despite the attempted innovations of some within our order, and the evil prophecies of some without, the old Catechism of Westminster and Cambridge is re-adopted as our symbol with hardly a dissenting vote; indeed, to be exact to the fact, with only one dissenting. After the announcement of the creed of our denomination, there follows the declaration of a broad and liberal basis on which we can coöperate with other evangelical bodies in the common work. No one can justly confound this with our doctrinal symbol. With rare unanimity the Council declared the doctrinal belief of the Congregationalists to be set forth in the Westminster Confession of 1648 and the Boston Confession of 1680, which two are identical for sub-

stance, and almost so in words. A similar unanimity received the new draft of our polity.

These two great points taking but little of the time of a unanimous body, the mind and heart of the Council were turned toward those great works that the providence of God now most signally imposes on the church. The vast West and South open to us with their waving harvests, and the fields were estimated in their extent, their necessities were recounted, and the means to meet them were devised and arranged. The questions of founding and supporting colleges and theological seminaries, bringing young men forward into the ministry, and evangelizing the vast regions opened to us by the war and by most extensive new settlements, together with the great wants of the freedmen, engrossed the most of the time and interest of the Council. To meet these necessities and occupy these openings of Providence, estimates and appropriations of seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars were made, and one hundred thousand more to build and endow a Congregational House in Boston.

We mark the fact that the Council comes in a series of great events and demands. It comes in at a crisis among the centuries and providences. The war and its success, the refounding of the government, the destruction of slavery, the meeting of the Atlantic and Pacific waves of immigration in our immense interior, and the enlarged resources and benevolence of our churches, were a series of events that called for a national Council of our denomination. The times demanded concerted action and consolidated strength, and it is with no ordinary satisfaction that we start off in the sublime work that God now gives us, in the old Westminster faith, that has done so much for the cause of Christ in our land, and with the regathered and well-digested Congregational polity of the Fathers. Our wonder and joy are that there was no appreciable demand for anything new in doctrine or in church government. We are a unit, and our field is continental.

SANCTIORES AURES PLEBIS QUAM CORDA SUNT SACERDOTUM. The ears of the people are more pious than the hearts of the preachers. So says Hilary of the Arian clergy who used the phraseology of the Nicene creed while they rejected its doctrine. Compelled to subscribe to this orthodox formula for substance of doctrine, if they would retain their livings on orthodox foundations, they adroitly used the words of the old faith, while their less learned but godly hearers had no conception of the new and perverting ideas that their preachers thrust under the words. An old policy, but not abandoned. In the great division in the orthodox church in Massachusetts, which the last seventy years have been accomplishing, the Arian, Pelagian

and Arminian preachers shrewdly continued the use of evangelical phrases. And now the use of certain terms, originating in and properly defined only by a pure faith, is no proof that one is of a pure faith. The hearers may be content because their ears hear with the old meaning, while their preachers utter the phrases with a new meaning. Depravity, atonement, regeneration, justification, and like leading terms, are familiar and easily uttered at examinations for licensure, ordination and elsewhere, when an inquiry, close and sometimes unpleasant, occasionally makes the discovery of new wine in old bottles. Terms, names and labels are very valuable for certain purposes. The civil law protects accepted and well known trade-marks; the moral law should do the same in theological wares. There is a growing elasticity, we do not say duplicity, to theological language, and so the injunction of the great Teacher is becoming more and more important: "Take heed what ye hear."

PUBLIC SPEAKING. We are a great imposition on ourselves. Our American habits of speech-making at every social gathering have become a kind of impertinence and nuisance. We gather for a ramble, a promenade, a chat, and before we are aware of it we have spoiled the occasion by an organized category of resolutions and speeches. The school examination is run into twilight and dullness by "a few remarks." The Selectmen are hanging a new gate to the pound, and John Buncombe, Esq., is called up for a speech. He is eloquent about Bunker Hill, stray cattle and a law against canker worms. He expects a nomination for the Legislature. Seven hundred children are having a jolly and pleasant time at a pic-nic, and suddenly they are hushed and marshalled to hear a half dozen "addresses." It is worse than a thunder shower for the little ones. We meet in convention to do some specified business, and a few "prominent members" are like fishes, with their mouths open half the time. They seem deeply impressed with the importance of that unfortunate line of Watts;

"My tongue, the glory of my frame."

How often in public gatherings have we wished for an Isaiah for moderator, that he might say to these men of easy knee and tongue: "Your strength is to sit still." Public talking has become a vice, and is ruining our social life. In some common schools they even compel the girls "to appear in public on the stage," so far has this mania for speech-making carried us. We wish that many of these disturbers of the peace would learn to do more and say less about it, and vastly less about themselves.